



S0-CBH-041




Margaret A. Means
Dec 25" 1913

L I B R A R Y



PRESENTED BY
Mrs. Preston H. Watters

LIBRARY
UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2025

AMERICAN
AND
ENGLISH STUDIES

AMERICAN
AND
ENGLISH STUDIES
BY
WHITELAW REID

VOLUME II
BIOGRAPHY, HISTORY, AND
JOURNALISM

NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
MDCCCCXIII

10/29/51

COPYRIGHT, 1913, BY CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

PUBLISHED, NOVEMBER, 1913

AC

8

.R4

v.2

LIBRARY
UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI

D. B. UPDIKE, THE MERRYMOUNT PRESS, BOSTON

TABLE OF CONTENTS

VOLUME II

| | PAGE |
|--|------|
| ABRAHAM LINCOLN | 3 |
| <i>University of Birmingham. December 7, 1910</i> | |
| THOMAS JEFFERSON | 37 |
| <i>University College of Wales. October 31, 1912</i> | |
| EDMUND BURKE | 73 |
| <i>Unveiling of Tablet on Burke's House. Bath, October 22, 1908</i> | |
| THE SCOT IN AMERICA AND THE ULSTER SCOT | 87 |
| <i>Edinburgh Philosophical Institution. November 1, 1911</i> | |
| TALLEYRAND | 135 |
| <i>Introduction to "Memoirs of the Prince de Talleyrand." New York, 1891</i> | |
| BYRON | 165 |
| <i>University College. Nottingham, November 29, 1910</i> | |
| AN EDITOR'S REFLECTIONS | |
| I. JOURNALISM AS A CAREER | 193 |
| <i>University of the City of New York. April 4, 1872</i> | |
| II. THE PRACTICAL ISSUES IN A NEWSPAPER OFFICE | 231 |
| <i>The Editorial Association of New York. Rochester, June 17, 1879</i> | |
| III. RECENT CHANGES IN THE PRESS | 281 |
| <i>First Bromley Lecture. Yale University, February 25, 1901</i> | |
| IV. JOURNALISTIC DUTIES AND OPPORTUNITIES | 313 |
| <i>Second Bromley Lecture. Yale University, February 28, 1901</i> | |

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

A RECENT essay on Dr. Johnson began with the remark, "We may talk about him, and praise him, because we shall be the better for so doing; but we shall certainly say nothing new about him." These words may be applied to Abraham Lincoln with the utmost emphasis. Libraries have been written about him. His devoted and accomplished secretaries prepared a monumental work, telling all the things proper that the public should be told of him and of his great days as seen from the White House. A kind of inferior Boswell, but more communicative and even less fastidious, appeared in the person of his own partner in his Illinois law office. Senators and Representatives in Congress vied with each other in biographies and eulogies. Every clerk that served him, every politician that gained access to him, every civilian soldier that owed him promotion or pardon, the very employees of the departments, the captains of tens or hundreds in the remoter party organizations, and, of course, the members of the press, who in pursuit of their duty followed his footsteps and guessed at his purposes,—all felt bound to record and generally to publish their facts and their observations. The statesmen and the press of all nations first laughed at him, then studied him, analyzed him, weighed and estimated him; and at the end the civilized world paid him homage. Certainly we are the better for talking about him and

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

praising him; but as certainly we can say nothing new about him. I shall try to avoid saying some of the old things.

I had the honor of knowing Mr. Lincoln a little before his nomination for the Presidency; in fact, of having been among the first, if not the first, of Republican editors outside of his state to propose his nomination in preference to our own state candidate. The acquaintance thus formed never of course became intimate—I was only an unimportant boy; but he was always kind to me, and I continued to see him from time to time till I sat near his bier in the White House, and afterward watched from the roof of the Treasury the long procession pass through Pennsylvania Avenue and up the Capitol Hill—the ever renewed procession, that lasted for a fortnight, that swept great cities into its ranks, and crossed half the country, to lay him at last at rest, amid the scenes of his youthful struggles and triumphs.

Eulogy of him often seemed to me, at the time of his death and long afterward, to run into uninformed apotheosis; and sentimentalists, with whom I knew him to have no sympathy, seized upon him after the manner of their kind, as their own particular hero, for their own particular purposes. Regarding him as a maker of history in the nineteenth century, I place him far above Bismarck, who created an empire; far above Gambetta, who saved a fallen people; or Mazzini, who helped put a new soul in another; or the Marquis Ito, who trans-

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

formed some hermit islanders into the present first of Asiatic and peer of European powers. Far be it from me to depreciate or even to estimate the net amount of good which the crucible of time may disclose in its last analysis of the life work of any one of these famous historic figures. I only recognize the present obvious fact, when I put above any or all of them the man who saved for liberty and humanity the greatest Republic of modern times, a continental Republic of now ninety millions of souls, besides its teeming island dependencies in both hemispheres; the man who crowned this patriotic duty by freeing three millions of slaves, whom others and not we had enslaved.

I would like to strip his name and fame from the incongruous and imaginary attributes under which so many eulogists have disguised him. Let me say at once, then, that this untaught offspring of the poor whites of Kentucky was not at the outset and never became that favorite type of some publicists, a retiring citizen, inattentive in general to other interests than those near him, entirely content with private life till roused by an unexpected call to public duty. The Illinois swamps of those days developed no such Cincinnatus amid their malaria. On the contrary, though personally modest and sensitive, he was from his earliest manhood a persistent office-seeker, and the most ambitious of men.

He was not in the least either a simple-minded rustic, or a professional "reformer." On the contrary, he was an ardent partisan, and the most skil-

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

ful master of men, and of all the intricacies of the game of politics, known in his state. He had small regard for many of the refinements of the modern Civil Service reformer. He knew how to use the post-offices to secure delegates, and he was ready enough to point out to his Congressman how a judicious use of other patronage would promote the good cause at the next convention. When he came to great place he still used patronage without hesitation—to advance high public interests, to gain support for the Union cause, to quiet discontent, to promote recruiting. Honesty he insisted on, but beyond that his official standard was not always the highest, and his judgment of individual character not always safe. Thus, in haste, he appointed many incompetent officers in the army and elsewhere, and often tolerated inefficiency after others had discovered it.

But he was not governed by personal likes and dislikes, and least of all by any remembrance of grievances. During his life at the bar no other lawyer had ever affronted and wounded him so deeply as Edwin M. Stanton; and the professional conduct was further embittered by unconcealed contempt for his backwoods appearance. Yet, in a critical moment and on the belief that Mr. Stanton could do the work in which his first appointee had not been successful, he did not hesitate to make this contemptuous and, as he thought, arrogant lawyer, his Secretary of War. A highly trained general, whom he had appointed and promoted, tortured

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

him by unexpected delays in the field and by sending him political letters, kept him waiting long at night in the general's ante-room—even once, it was said, went to bed without seeing him at all. He kept this man in high command, and persisted in “giving him another trial,” in spite of halting obedience and frequent failure, long after the country and the Cabinet called for change. The ablest and most useful member of his Cabinet was used as a rallying-point for the disaffection which sought to prevent his renomination, and this member of his official family finally resigned on a poor question of patronage. He seized the opportunity, a few months later, to appoint that man Chief Justice of the United States.

He was not “perpetually telling humorous and sometimes *risqué* stories in the White House;” he had no such conception of the duties of a statesman in exalted position and in a time of extreme peril. On the contrary, he probably told fewer stories during his whole stay in the White House than in any previous year of his adult life; and for every one he did tell a hundred poorer and coarser ones were fathered on him. Nor did his stories call for the unctuous and superfluous excuse that they afforded him a needed relief from the sadness of the time. No doubt he was sad in the White House, but he had been sad all his life. The wit and humor with which his stories overflowed were an essential part of his strange frontier nature, as essential as his melancholy, his ready sympathies, or his am-

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

bition. He had no dissipations, and no other amusements; instead of these he told stories from boyhood to admiring comrades; he told them uncommonly well, and in public they always illustrated his argument and helped him carry his point. Nothing, for instance, could have made plainer his view about the unfitness of the Free Soilers to assume the place of a great national party, and, with their one idea, undertake the complex duties of carrying on the government of the country, than his story at Worcester, Massachusetts, as early as 1848, about the Yankee pedlar who had but one pair of trousers in his stock, and commended it to every customer as "large enough to fit any man—and small enough to fit any boy."

He was always the life of every country tavern where he stayed, and his stories on the circuit were as eagerly awaited by the bench and bar as the regular sessions of the court. Yet at the most critical periods of his life this incessant story-teller was the victim of such melancholia that his friends feared for his reason; always, when not in animated conversation, he was the most melancholy looking of men. In the White House, and under the anxieties of the Civil War, he was naturally still more gloomy. To regard this highest and saddest statesman of the century as a mere professional wearer of the cap and bells—to take this sacred name as a convenient decoration for some popular humorist, or for a "joke-smith by trade," to eulogize some such one as "the Abraham Lin-

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

coln of American literature"—that is the last indignity from the sentimental school which he distrusted in life, and which thus belittles his blood-earned laurels.

He was not in the early days and, in fact, he never became a great lawyer—hardly even a thorough one. He did become slowly—he did everything slowly—an unsurpassed jury lawyer, with what some of his professional rivals considered the drawback of being also an honest one. He could not succeed unless he thoroughly believed in his case—and he rarely tried.

He was an intensely religious man, and knew the Bible better than any other book ; his own conduct was governed by an exalted ethical code,—as exalted as that of Marcus Aurelius,—but he was never a member of any church, and if the opinions of two of his partners, of his wife, and of some other intimates can be accepted, he could not be accurately described as a convinced Christian.

He was the great emancipator, but in politics he was never an Abolitionist—in fact, he distrusted and opposed them and their party. At the beginning of his public career he did not even particularly concern himself with slavery, although he always thought ill of it. He devoted himself to local issues, and he rose first to the favor of his constituents by arguing the navigability of the Sangamon River, and by leading the successful effort for the removal of the state capital from Vandalia to Springfield, near its banks. When slavery was

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

forced by its friends into state and national politics, he, like most of those around him, disliked but recognized the authority of the Fugitive Slave Law. The Boston Abolitionists had that justification, if no other, for their amiable description of him as the Illinois slave-hound. His crowning glory in later years was the fact that, instead of demanding that the law should be defied, or else that the Southern States be encouraged to go off and set up a slave republic for themselves; instead of meanwhile denouncing the Constitution of the United States as a covenant with Death and an agreement with Hell,—these, I believe, were the restrained expressions of Mr. William Lloyd Garrison,—he became the leader of those antislavery men who knew how to use, and to persuade the people to use, the forces of a constitutional government, through the political agencies it had created, to promote by peaceful and legal means the greatest cause that could possibly arise under it—in a word, to meet the aggressions of slavery with the political and constitutional triumph of a national antislavery party.

I have mentioned some of the distortions with which unwise eulogists and self-seeking extremists have overlaid the fame of Lincoln. Let me add that there is but one key—save events—to the character of this strange, uncouth, self-educated, gifted, and ambitious son of the commonest of the common people. His nature from childhood was one of absolute truthfulness, with himself as well as with others; of absolute honesty, with himself and with

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

others; and of an absolute courage that would face the stake if need be for his convictions of duty. Join to these cardinal traits unconquerable good nature, constant goodwill, instinctive sympathy with and understanding of "the plain people," persuasive skill in awaking and patience in awaiting their perceptions of the right, and the most utter democracy of feeling and manners, and you have the qualities that brought him to the front in a pioneer community—that gave him the entire confidence of all classes—that, aided by great talents and tremendous pertinacity, made him the leader of his party at his home, presently in his state, and then in his country—that always insured him a devoted following, that led him to enormous power, to the highest achievements, and to a martyr's crown.

He was the child of poor pioneers in a rough settlement of emigrants and adventurers in southwestern Kentucky. They had been cradled amid Indian atrocities. The grandfather was shot dead in sight of his home, and as the savage rushed out from the sheltering woods upon the six-year-old boy, Thomas Lincoln, who was clinging to the corpse, an older brother saved this future father of the emancipator by a rifle-shot from the cabin. When he grew up, this orphan flotsam rescued from the wreck made by the Indian scalping-knife could not read or write, though his wife afterward taught him to trace his name and to spell his way painfully a little in the New Testament. Their

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

immortal son was born in a log cabin, fourteen feet square; and when, seven years later, the roving parents removed to a remoter wilderness and cheaper land in southern Indiana, they lived first in a "half-faced camp," that is to say, in a log cabin of which the side to the south was left out, while, of course, the lop-sided structure had neither windows nor doors nor floor. The lad had altogether, but in widely separated fragments, considerably less than one year's attendance at school, and the last of this came when he was sixteen years old. The books slowly gathered in his father's cabin were the Bible, Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, Æsop's Fables, Weems's *Life of Washington*, a small *History of the United States*, and *Robinson Crusoe*. Out of these he began digging his education for himself, lying on the floor and reading at night by the light of the blazing logs in the fireplace. From these books and this painful study he developed the extraordinary English style, sometimes quaint but always lucid, convincing, and well-nigh perfect, which marks most of his public productions, and rises to such world-classics as the speech at Gettysburg, the letter to the mother of five sons lost in battle, or the close of the second inaugural.

I shall cite two of these to make good my bold claim that this untaught young pioneer evolved from his intimate knowledge of the few books I have named a well-nigh perfect English style. It was during the dark days of the war that he wrote this letter of sympathy to a bereaved mother:

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

“I have been shown, in the files of the War Department, a statement that you are the mother of five sons who have died gloriously on the field of battle. I feel how weak and fruitless must be any words of mine which should attempt to beguile you from your grief for a loss so overwhelming, but I cannot refrain from tendering to you the consolation which may be found in the thanks of the Republic they died to save. I pray that our Heavenly Father may assuage the anguish of your bereavement, and leave you only the cherished memory of the loved and lost, and the solemn pride that must be yours, to have laid so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of Freedom.”

What classic author, in our common English tongue, has surpassed that? And next, may I ask, what English or American orator has, on a similar occasion, surpassed this address on the battlefield of Gettysburg?

“Fourscore and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting-place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this. But, in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate—we cannot consecrate—we cannot hallow—this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember, what we say here, but it can

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

never forget what they did here. It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion—that we here highly resolve that these dead should not have died in vain—that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom—and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.”

The pioneer lad, lying on the floor and reading his mother's books by the light of the log fire, learned something more besides a wonderful English style. He toiled a little, unaided, over English grammar, and sometimes he tried to master the mysteries of multiplication and division by ciphering with a bit of charcoal on the back of the wooden fire-shovel. When this was covered with figures he would shave them off with his father's "draw-shave," and begin again. He grew fast, was unusually strong, and was supposed to work on his father's place. But he snatched eagerly at every chance to listen to the political talk of the elders, to attend the trial of a lawsuit, or to read a borrowed Louisville newspaper; and presently this barefoot, tow-clad boy of fifteen or sixteen was mounting a stump in his father's clearing and giving the others a chance to stop work in order to listen to him trying to make a speech! His mother died when he was only nine years old; but a step-

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

mother came a year later, who encouraged his efforts, and secured him his last fitful attendance at school.

When nineteen he had grown into a young giant of six feet four. He was always a dutiful and affectionate son, but he was now weary of home routine, and filled with the youthful and frontier lust for wandering. Still he was easily convinced that it was his duty to continue helping the family; and this was made easier by the chance given for service as a flatboat bow-hand, on a trip to New Orleans, at eight dollars a month. He next assisted in another family removal, this time to still newer land, in Illinois. He drove the ox-team through the almost bottomless roads, for a fortnight; helped put up the log cabin, ploughed fifteen acres of prairie sod, and split rails enough to fence it. At last, when he attained his majority, he took odd jobs from others, supported himself, and in his frequent leisure kept up the stump-speaking habit in the clearings, sometimes with an audience of farm hands, sometimes only to the surrounding stumps or the cattle. Then came another trip down the Mississippi in a flatboat which he helped to build; and incidentally a visit to a slave auction in New Orleans, which led the embryo politician to exclaim to his companions: "Boys, let's get away from this. If I ever get a chance to hit this thing, I'll hit it hard." Much happened first, but the chance came, and the former flatboatman was as good as his word.

At the outbreak of the Black Hawk War (a defi-

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

ant return to the state by savages who had agreed to go beyond its borders), the young fellow enlisted, was immediately chosen captain by the company raised in the neighborhood, and served till the end. The most serious exploits remembered in his military service were his indignant rescue of a half-starved, unwarlike Indian whom the soldiers were about to kill; and his refusal to betray to deserved discipline some of his own men who, without his knowledge, had broken into the officers' stores and got drunk on them. The consequent sentence on Captain Lincoln required him to wear a wooden sword for three days in punishment,—a sentence to which he submitted with perfect simplicity and composure.

With this episode the record of the pioneer lad, the rail-splitter, flatboatman, and volunteer militiaman, now twenty-two years old, is closed. He next takes more vigorously than ever to attending the local courts and making stump speeches; widens his reputation as an inveterate story-teller; resolves to be a lawyer and borrows law-books; announces himself as a candidate for the legislature, and meantime tries to keep a country store for a living. He was defeated for the legislature, but had the almost solid vote of his own neighborhood; and he broke up as a merchant, but readily gave his notes for his debts, began paying them off from his first earnings as a lawyer, and finished the process, years afterward, out of his congressional salary. Meantime he worked away by himself over

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

his law-books, took any odd job that offered for his board, profited by the prominence his canvass for the legislature had given him to get appointed postmaster, and studied land-surveying in borrowed books, in order to be made assistant surveyor. Next year he tried again for the legislature, and was elected.

When he thus entered upon a public career he was twenty-five years of age. Eight successive elections to the legislature, one term in Congress, an unsuccessful effort to get appointed land commissioner, an increasing law practice that placed him among the foremost lawyers of the state, several canvasses as the nominee of his party for Presidential elector, then the unsuccessful contest with Stephen A. Douglas for the United States Senate—that gives, in brief, the several steps in this public career up to his election by the new anti-slavery party as President of the United States.

While a private citizen, an outstanding feature of his character was the ingenuous recklessness with which he ran into debt, coupled with the scrupulous, in fact, relentless honesty with which he paid his debts. The first conspicuous feature in his public service, in the legislature, was an equal readiness to plunge the state into extravagant expenditures for internal improvements, and the same rigid view afterward as to the duty of payment, coupled with a becoming modesty ever afterward about his own skill in finance. The next,

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

and far the most important feature in his eight years' work in the Illinois state capitol, was his invincible determination, in spite of all the adverse personal and political influences by which he was surrounded, to place himself on record against resolutions, overwhelmingly passed by the legislature, which disapproved of abolition societies, and declared the right of property in slaves held in the slave-holding states to be sacred. Lincoln's protest, as entered upon the legislative minutes for March 3, 1837, readily admitted that "the promulgation of abolition doctrines tends rather to increase than abate the evils of slavery;" but it insisted on declaring slavery itself, though just pronounced sacred by the legislature, to be founded on both injustice and bad policy. For an ordinary politician, this in the Illinois of that day might have been suicide. For him, it was merely notice to all concerned of the line on which he was fully determined to argue the question out. Meantime he went placidly about his business, was forgiven his eccentric declaration of principle, and retained in the confidence of the Whigs till he lost any chances he might have had for reelection to Congress by equal obstinacy in his opinions concerning the unjust origin of the Mexican War.

During all this period he was encountering the brilliant and popular leader of the Illinois Democracy, Stephen A. Douglas. Sometimes they were rivals in popular elections, constantly in the courts or on the stump. At last the growing pretensions

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

of the slave power pitted them against each other on a stage which attracted the eyes of the whole nation. The South claimed the right to take slaves with them into the newly organized territories of Kansas and Nebraska. Mr. Douglas undertook to conciliate northern dislike of this demand by proposing to leave it to a vote of the people in each territory whether they should have slavery or not. Mr. Lincoln refused to be a party to this device for conniving at the possible extension to soil hitherto free of a system which twenty-one years before he had declared, in his defiant protest, to be "founded on both injustice and bad policy."

Mr. Douglas was now a member of the United States Senate, and a candidate for reëlection; and already the many mouths of rumor were proclaiming him the next Democratic candidate for the Presidency. Mr. Lincoln's party friends selected him as the strongest man in the state to oppose Mr. Douglas for the Senate, and challenged a joint discussion of the political issues by the rivals, before popular audiences in all parts of the state. From the day that discussion began, practically all that was left of Mr. Lincoln's life, in peace or in war, lay in this antislavery struggle.

The institution that was thus about to take him up and push him forward to power and deathless fame, and was about also to engross all the energies of the whole country, was not introduced to America by its independent people, or even by the British colonists. It had existed on American soil

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

among the Spanish and Portuguese a hundred years before the foot of a slave touched any part of what is now the United States. It had existed fifty years in the British West Indies before Dutch vessels brought the first cargoes of slaves to the British colony of tobacco planters in Virginia. Washington, Jefferson, and all the fathers of the Republic were opposed to it; long after independence, only Georgia and South Carolina insisted on its qualified recognition in the Constitution. Not till the invention of the cotton-gin (in 1795) gradually made the slave-grown cotton enormously profitable did most of the Southern States stifle their dislike to it. Yet as late as at the date of the Declaration of Independence, a hundred and ninety-two slave ships were still sailing from Liverpool, London, Bristol, and Lancaster, and their united cargo was said to be forty-seven thousand negroes! Not till 1808, a quarter of a century after the acknowledgment of American independence, did Great Britain attempt to stop this traffic; and not till 1838 did she abolish slavery in her own colonies—just one year *after* this rail-splitter and flat-boatman had staked his early political existence on recording in the Illinois legislative minutes his denunciation of the injustice of slavery, as against the declaration of most of his colleagues that in the Southern States it was sacred. He lived to make an end of it in his country, only twenty-five years after Great Britain, only fifteen years after France, and in the same year with Holland.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

Hardly any discussion before popular audiences in America had ever commanded such wide attention as the Lincoln-Douglas debate, in their canvass for the senatorship. It was the first to be reported at such length, *verbatim*, in the newspapers. As Horace Greeley afterward exultingly declared, it was the first which was subsequently adopted in full as a campaign document by the defeated side. The Republican leaders seized on it for this purpose, giving Mr. Douglas's speeches as fully and fairly as they did Mr. Lincoln's. It was eagerly read in this form all over the North long after Mr. Lincoln had lost the senatorship, and throughout the greater Presidential contest that followed.

With the inflexible determination which always marked him when his own mind was clearly made up, and forced him at such times inexorably to reject the advice of even his most trusted friends, Mr. Lincoln twice in that canvass invited his own defeat. In his speech to the state convention, which nominated him for the Senate, he startled the state and the nation with these opening sentences:

“If we could first know where we are and whither we are tending, we could better judge what to do and how to do it. We are now far into the fifth year since a policy was initiated, with the avowed object and confident promise of putting an end to slavery agitation. Under the operation of that policy, that agitation has not only not ceased, but has constantly augmented. In my opinion it will not cease until a crisis shall have been reached and

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

passed. 'A house divided against itself cannot stand.' I believe this government cannot endure permanently, half slave and half free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved—I do not expect the house to fall—but I do expect it will cease to be divided. It will become all one thing or all the other. Either the opponents of slavery will arrest the further spread of it, and place it where the public mind shall rest in the belief that it is in course of ultimate extinction; or its advocates will push it forward till it shall become alike lawful in all the states, old as well as new, North as well as South."

This momentous declaration had been carefully considered, written out, and read to a dozen or more of his most trusted friends. Not one approved of it for the opening of a popular campaign; one, in the blunt fashion of the place and time, burst out with the declaration that it was a "d—d fool utterance." His life-long and intimate friend, Leonard Swett, wrote him that the first ten lines of his speech defeated him. Another anxious and frightened politician followed him to his office to remonstrate, but got this reply: "If I could save but one thing from the record of my whole life, I would choose that speech and save it from the wreck."

Only a few weeks later he amiably, but as obstinately, defied his friends again. Mr. Douglas had just put some questions to him in the first joint debate. Mr. Lincoln replied to them in the second, and in turn put certain questions to Mr. Douglas. These were likewise carefully written out and shown beforehand to his friends. One of them de-

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

manded that Douglas should say whether, under his Squatter Sovereignty doctrine, a territorial legislature could exclude slavery, in spite of the recent Dred Scott decision. His friends begged him not to ask this question, warned him that Douglas would surely seize the opportunity to answer Yes, and that this would satisfy the opposing antislavery sentiment of the state and elect him. "If you ask that question," said his friends almost unanimously, "you can never be Senator." "Perhaps so," he replied, "but I am after larger game. If Douglas does answer Yes, in the face of present southern demands, he can never be President; and that battle is worth a hundred of this."

His political sagacity was as thoroughly vindicated as his obstinate courage. He did put his question, and did draw out the answer he expected. That answer did elect Douglas to the Senate, but it lost him the friendship of the South. Judah P. Benjamin, of Louisiana, told the consequences in open Senate, as early as May, 1860, before the Presidential campaign was fairly begun.

"The Senator's [Mr. Douglas's] adversary stood upon principle and was beaten; and lo! he is the candidate of a mighty party for the Presidency of the United States. The Senator from Illinois faltered. He got the prize for which he faltered; but lo! the grand prize of his ambition slips to-day from his grasp because of his faltering in his former contest; and his success in the canvass for the Senate, purchased for an ignoble price, has cost him the Presidency of the United States."

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

Lincoln's courageous honesty and his splendid intellectual display in the joint debate thus gave him the Republican national nomination; but the fateful campaign that followed brought a result which Mr. Benjamin probably did not anticipate. It made him President. His unflinching adherence to his convictions had driven or tempted Douglas into a position where he failed for lack of southern support; and the South into a position where it failed for lack of northern support; and thus both were presently confronted by a successful antislavery party, in constitutional control of the national government. The South could not take another step for the spread of slavery in the Union. Next, it attempted to break the Union up. To defeat that attempt was the sworn duty of the President, and it now became Mr. Lincoln's life-long, all-absorbing aim. He had followed legal and constitutional methods till his opponents abandoned them, and made war upon the national government. Thenceforward he sought to advance on the plain path before him only as far and as fast as he could carry the people with him. This was his distinction—to know the mind of the people, to command their confidence, to persuade them of their high duty, to lead them always, but to lead only as fast as they would follow.

Antislavery man as he had always been by conviction, and antislavery President as he was now by election, he realized that his only actual man-

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

date from the people was to resist the efforts of slaveholders to extend that institution over free soil within the Union. But he was not kept long in a waiting attitude. The South hastened to take the initiative. A plot to assassinate him before he could enter Washington to be inaugurated was detected and thwarted. The Cotton States were already setting up their Secession Confederacy, and the whole South was aflame and defiant. Nevertheless, his inaugural address was one patient effort to soothe and persuade. He made it perfectly plain that they had not the excuse of any attack from him, present or intended, upon slavery where it already existed, under constitutional sanction, and he closed with this touching appeal:

“In *your* hands, my dissatisfied fellow-countrymen, and not in *mine*, is the momentous issue of civil war. The Government will not assail *you*. You can have no conflict without being yourselves the aggressors. *You* have no oath registered in Heaven to destroy the Government, while *I* shall have the most solemn one to ‘preserve, protect, and defend it.’

“I am loth to close. We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battlefield and patriot grave to every living heart and hearthstone all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature.”

The answer to this appeal was the prompt invest-

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

ment of Fort Sumter, in the harbor of Charleston. The mere attempt to supply it with provisions was made the excuse for bombarding and reducing it. "We must sprinkle blood in the faces of the people," said a venerable South Carolinian, impatient at a momentary hesitation before actual firing on the flag of the Union. After that there was no southern hesitation.

With nearly one-third of the Union thus revolted or revolting, Mr. Lincoln found himself dependent on an army precisely 17,113 strong, officers and men, scattered over the continent, along the Atlantic coast, in the West, in Texas, New Mexico, Utah, and on the Pacific slope! The day after Sumter surrendered, he called on the states not in revolt for seventy-five thousand volunteers; after the early disasters, Bull Run and the like, he called, at different times, with the sanction of Congress, for a million; twice, later, he called for three hundred thousand more; at the triumphant end he had over a million men in the field under arms.

While the South was rushing into war, Mr. Lincoln was besieged in the White House by the office-seekers, till he was himself driven to a quaint account of his situation. He said he was like a man "living in a house and kept busy renting lodgings at one end of it while he knew the other end was on fire." Not till the 6th Massachusetts, under orders for Washington, had to fight its way through Baltimore, was this investing army of office-seekers scattered. Then the new President

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

found himself isolated in the national capital for nearly a week, with railway and telegraphic communication cut in every direction; while hundreds of army officers and other employees of the government deserted their posts and fled South to take up similar positions in the Confederacy; and the air was even filled with threats of the capture of Mr. Lincoln and the capital—till at last the 7th New York was able by a circuitous route to come to his relief.

At such a time new and graver perils broke out in the most unexpected quarter. Mr. Lincoln's Secretary of State, a statesman of long service and great national distinction, was reputed his most sagacious and trustworthy adviser. This gentleman had already offered revisions that would have weakened the inaugural of the untried Illinoisan; had proposed a policy of bravado and probable war with European countries as a means of uniting the distracted nation at home, and had seriously suggested to the new President that his Secretary should be left with practically exclusive power over such momentous and needless additions to the existing dangers. He now submitted a letter of instructions for our Minister to Great Britain, the deservedly distinguished Charles Francis Adams, which was to be laid textually before the British Foreign Minister. This dealt with mere rumors of Lord John Russell's being ready to see southern commissioners unofficially. Mr. Adams was in that case to break off any intercourse,

official or unofficial, with the British government. If the South were recognized, Great Britain was to be told that we had been enemies twice before and must now become so again; while if Great Britain accorded belligerent rights to Confederate privateers, there was an adequate remedy, and we should avail ourselves of it! And, finally, the letter recognized that out of this attitude war might come "with one, two, or even more European nations." This last was certainly correct. From such a document, so submitted, war between two countries at least might easily have arisen. Mr. Lincoln, the prairie state politician, absolutely inexperienced in either executive or diplomatic work, and already environed in the flood of new and startling difficulties, nevertheless without hesitation again overruled his accomplished Secretary of State, modified with his own pen the belligerent instructions, and saved a dangerous if not fatal misstep. Mr. Lincoln did this alone.

Once again he helped avert a similar calamity for the United States and Great Britain, but this time he had an advantage in following up the previous work of an exalted personage, whose memory is sacred in England and almost equally revered in America. Let us recall the story of the southern commissioners, taken by force from the British packet "Trent." A high statesmanship, as well as goodwill to America, was shown by the late Queen Victoria in the modification of Lord John Russell's dispatch on that subject. On the

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

day Mr. Lincoln received news of the seizure of Messrs. Mason and Slidell, he said: "I fear the traitors will prove to be white elephants. We must stick to American principles concerning the rights of neutrals. We fought Great Britain for insisting, by theory and practice, on the right to do precisely what Captain Wilkes has done. If Great Britain should now protest, we must give them up and apologize for the act as a violation of our doctrines." At the moment Mr. Lincoln said that, his Cabinet was sharing the general satisfaction of the country at the seizure. But these excited, though old and experienced advisers, finally accepted his view. After the protracted Cabinet discussions, Mr. Seward wrote an admirable reply to the letter Queen Victoria had modified, and concluded it with the statement that "the four persons in question will be cheerfully liberated." Two great heads of state, from their independent positions, and without knowledge by either of what the other would do, unconsciously coöperating in a crisis of the utmost gravity, had kept the peace between the two branches of the English-speaking race.

The war into which the South drove Mr. Lincoln in their effort to break up the Union was at first sustained by the northern people at large only as a war to maintain the Union; they could not have been united in its support for any wider purpose. He would not therefore permit it to be diverted

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

from that character—would not let it appear as a movement on his part to abolish or even to injure slavery where that institution had an admittedly legal existence under the Constitution. He was even anxious to keep the Confiscation Act against the escaping slaves of rebels from bearing the appearance of a plan to turn the war into an abolition channel. Not till he was sure that the conservative masses of the North realized the necessity was he willing to use this power, already put in his hands, against slavery within its old limits. His extreme caution exasperated many of his supporters; and after the disastrous campaigns through which the war dragged its weary way in the first and second years, Horace Greeley, his old colleague in the only Congress in which either of them ever served, impatiently addressed to him in print “The Prayer of Twenty Millions,” insisting that attempts to put down the rebellion and yet uphold its inciting cause must be futile, and demanding the enforcement of laws which fully authorized him to free large classes of slaves. Mr. Lincoln immediately replied, through the press, in a letter to Mr. Greeley:

“As to the policy I ‘seem to be pursuing,’ as you say, I have not meant to leave any one in doubt. I would save the Union. I would save it in the shortest way under the Constitution.

“My paramount object is to save the Union, and not either to save or destroy Slavery.

“If I could save the Union without freeing any slave,

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

I would do it—if I could save it by freeing all the slaves, I would do it—and if I could save it by freeing some and leaving others alone, I would also do that.

“What I do about Slavery and the Colored Race, I do because I believe it helps to save this Union; and what I forbear, I forbear because I do not believe it would help to save the Union.

“I have here stated my purpose according to my views of official duty; and I intend no modification of my oft-expressed personal wish that all men everywhere could be free.”

This patience, moderation, and transparent candor had exactly the effect he desired in consolidating the wavering sentiment of the North into a conviction that the only way to save the Union was to destroy slavery. Of his right to do it, in time of war, as Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy, and under the war powers of the Constitution, he never had the slightest doubt; what he waited and watched for was evidence that the people were coming up to his own feeling of the necessity. Meantime, he replied to similar appeals in the same spirit, skilfully stating every objection so as to draw out the popular opinion. This kind of discussion with delegations to the White House went on for a month. It was on the 22d of August he sent Horace Greeley the statement just quoted. On the 22d of September the nation was electrified with a proclamation offering gradual and compensated emancipation to all Slave States not in rebellion at the next meeting of Congress, and where this

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

offer should not be accepted, declaring all slaves free forever, from the 1st of January following.

Even yet he was in advance of the people. In the autumn elections following this proclamation, his opponents wrested from him the states of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, while many other states also showed grave losses for his party. But he never wavered and he had not misjudged the opportunity. He redoubled his efforts to sustain the army and navy, enforced demands for more troops, even at the ultimate cost of draft riots in New York, banished Vallandigham, the most audacious northern sympathizer with the war against the Union, conciliated as far as possible his supporters in every state, bore up under repeated defeats in the field, tried new commanders where old ones continued to fail, and then waited with what patience he could on generals who still did not fight or did not win victories. Finally he pushed Grant and Sherman forward against Vicksburg, and Meade with the Army of the Potomac against Lee; and at last, on the following Fourth of July, he heard in the thunders answering each other across the Union from Gettysburg to Vicksburg, that his daring and noble proclamation was made good.

We all know the sequel. The Mississippi soon flowed again unvexed to the sea. Sherman marched through Georgia. Grant fought his way to the defences of Richmond. Republican discontent disappeared, and the War President was reelected. The

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

spirit in which the worn leader of his people accepted the new power they had conferred shines through the tender words with which his second inaugural was closed:

“Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray, that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondsman’s two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, ‘The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.’ With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation’s wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and a lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.”

I have only to tell what this man was, and what he did,—not to offer any eulogy upon him. If one were needed, what nobler eulogy could be uttered than the simple statement that after such a strain and such trials, with final triumph plainly in sight, he uttered those words and felt as he spoke.

THOMAS JEFFERSON

THOMAS JEFFERSON

THOMAS JEFFERSON was the author of the Declaration of Independence. Who will name the achievement by any other man of his blood which has more largely influenced the world for good than that empire-shaking, continent-shaking document, that saved Great Britain from herself; that saved America *for* herself, and developed in place of the two and a half millions of that day a nation of ninety-three millions on the continent, while it protects and guides islands of ten or twelve millions more in every zone and on every sea; that shook down the most obstinate of monarchies, turned it into a republic, with a regenerated people, now the most prosperous government France ever had, and the most stable and enduring it ever had since Louis XIV — not excepting that of either Napoleon.

Yet these are merely some of the external results more or less distinctly traceable to the momentous statement he addressed to the civilized world on the Fourth of July, 1776. I do not dwell upon any of them or argue them. Still less do I insist upon the English style, lucid, convincing, and of a stately dignity (unsurpassed, I venture to think, by any official paper in a thousand years of Parliamentary history), in which he clothed one of the most philosophic and unassailable and yet most revolutionary accounts of the origin of government since Plato: "We hold these truths to

THOMAS JEFFERSON

be self-evident, that all men are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these rights governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed." There was the inward and spiritual meaning of this whole gospel of our American Welshman—the Declaration to which he brought the people of his country and to which he drew the considerate judgment of all others.

His real work was the diffusion of an unaccustomed idea of the origin of government and of the scope of human rights,—rights held not as Englishmen or Americans or Frenchmen, but simply as men. That is the origin of the spiritual unrest which broke out in Europe at the close of the eighteenth century, and now pervades all classes everywhere,—an unrest not to be quieted until it triumphs. But it never meant, and Jefferson never meant, the madness which the agitators of the present day find in it. It never meant withdrawing the mainspring of the world's progress—free individual initiative. On the contrary, it meant the widest extension of free individual initiative to every human being capable of it, limited only by respect for the equal rights of others. As Mr. Jefferson wrote to M. L'Hommande (Paris, 1787): "The policy of the American government is to leave their citizens free, neither restraining nor aiding them in their pursuits." And to M. de Meu-

THOMAS JEFFERSON

nier, in 1795: "I am a warm zealot for the attainment and enjoyment by all mankind of as much liberty as each may exercise, without injury to the equal liberty of his fellow citizens."

Neither does it seem to me in the least worth while to revive the old controversies as to the originality of the Declaration, or as to what thinkers first conceived its propositions. Whether mere platitude, as some said, or wild speculation by an irresponsible theorist, as others said, or profound and philosophical consideration of the subjects of greatest human concern, as in the end it came to be generally considered, the famous Declaration consisted of principles first so stated, arranged, collated, and phrased by practically the sole pen of Thomas Jefferson.

Still, forty-seven years later, his fiery old colleague, John Adams, wrote to Pickering: "There is not an idea in it but what had been hackneyed in Congress for two years before. The substance of it is contained in the declaration of rights, and the violation of those rights, in the journals of Congress in 1774. Indeed, the essence of it is contained in a pamphlet voted and printed by the town of Boston before the first Congress met, composed by James Otis, as I suppose, in one of his lucid intervals, and pruned and polished by Samuel Adams."¹ Even Lee of Virginia wrote that it was copied from Locke's "Treatise on Government." Others traced

¹ *Life of Thomas Jefferson*, by Henry S. Randall, vol. i, p. 186.

THOMAS JEFFERSON

its inspiration to Rousseau's "Contrat Social," or to Montesquieu's "Esprit des Lois;" and others, with better reason, to Coke upon Littleton. A less respectable suggestion was that it was imitated from the Mecklenburg Declaration.

Now, Mr. Jefferson was chosen by the Congress a member, the member with the largest vote, on the committee for its preparation. The other members of the committee were John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Roger Sherman, and Robert Livingston. He was chosen by this committee to prepare and present the work. He did present it; the people of his country did unite and act upon it; the world did give it a startled and universal consideration. That is the essential thing. There were four other men of the highest note on this committee of Congress. No one of them did it; no one claims to have done it. Every change ever made in it from Mr. Jefferson's original draft is on record. No one of them is vital; though, as John Adams himself said, it might have been better if some passages had been left as they were. Still, the document is in better taste without some of them. The young, self-trained writer of thirty-three had not then wholly outgrown his sophomore style, and he never outgrew his habit of over-statement. But as it stands it is essentially his, and as such it has taken its place among the epoch-making state papers of the world.

He might no doubt have remained silent under the remark of his old friend and co-worker of Mas-

THOMAS JEFFERSON

sachusetts. But silence was rarely his gift—especially when his vanity was wounded. So he wrote: “The observations that the Declaration contained no new ideas, that it is a commonplace compilation, its sentiments hackneyed in Congress two years before, and its essence contained in Otis’s pamphlet may all be true. Of that I am not to be the judge. Otis’s pamphlet I never saw, and whether I had gathered my ideas from reading or reflection I do not know. I know only that I turned to neither book nor pamphlet while writing it. I did not consider it as any part of my charge to invent new ideas altogether, and to offer no sentiment which had ever been expressed before. I will say for Mr. Adams, however, that he supported the Declaration with zeal and ability, fighting fearlessly for every word of it.”¹ It must be admitted that Mr. Jefferson does not appear badly in this little passage at arms. To-day, certainly no high-minded American would have had the author of the Declaration answer otherwise, or would have had his concluding paragraph, which welded indissolubly together the thirteen colonies, changed from the words in which he framed and signed it:

“We, therefore, the Representatives of the United States of America, in General Congress assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do in the name, and by authority of the good people of these colonies, solemnly publish and declare, that these united colonies are, and of right ought

¹ Randall’s *Life*, vol. i, p. 186.

THOMAS JEFFERSON

to be, free and independent States ; that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain is, and ought to be, totally dissolved; and that as free and independent States, they have full power to levy war, conclude peace, contract alliances, establish commerce, and to do all other acts and things which independent States may of right do. And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge each other our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honour.”

The young man who wrote the Declaration at the age of thirty-three, without ever having been out of his native colonies, or much even out of the one in which he was born, after a subsequent career crowded with conspicuous duties and honors, and half a century later, looked back over his whole life and selected the three things he had done by which he wished to be remembered, and which he wished recorded on his tombstone. Two were the work of his youth, the statute for Religious Freedom in Virginia and the Declaration; the third was the passion of his old age, the founding of the University of Virginia.

What a list of undisputed and extraordinary achievements he thus ignored! Besides these three, he was the author of “A Summary View of the Rights of British America,” subsequently adopted by Edmund Burke and published broadcast in England, with the result that the name of Thomas Jefferson decorated the list of proscribed in the first

THOMAS JEFFERSON

bill of attainder. This "Summary View" was afterward considered even more cogent and comprehensive than the Declaration. Against a multitude of difficulties, somewhat of his own making, he secured the annexation of a territorial empire to the nation his Declaration had created—the province of Louisiana, at the mouth of the Mississippi, with a vast extent of territory on the west bank of that river, stretching almost to the Canadian frontier, and, as he believed at the time, on the east almost to Florida. As a mere tyro in legislation he secured, against overwhelming social pressure, the abolition both of entail and of primogeniture in his native colony. He served for a year on various diplomatic commissions in Europe, and for four years as Minister to France, during the turbulence of the Revolution; consulted not only privately but officially with the revolutionists, and went beyond diplomatic usage or propriety in manifesting his active sympathy with them; served twice as governor of his native state, once as Secretary of State to George Washington, once as Vice-President of the United States, and twice as President. He made great contributions to the plant life and to the agriculture of the new country, and imported for the public benefit high-bred cattle and other domestic animals. He issued the patent for the cotton-gin, and was almost the first to grasp the enormous possibilities which finally led to its making cotton King—to the temporary misfortune of Lancashire, and the honor forever of her splen-

THOMAS JEFFERSON

did and self-denying workingmen. Although not strong in finance, he gave shape in our system to one really valuable financial contribution, the decimal system. He created and led the Democratic party, which ruled the country, almost without a break, for over half a century. He first taught his countrymen their vast inheritance, its capabilities, and even its extent, from the northwestern stretch revealed in the Louisiana Purchase to the yet more important and imperial region revealed by the Lewis and Clark expedition, which was absolutely his, in its conception, in its organization, in the choice of the men to conduct it, and in its support.

Yet it was a sure instinct that led the old man to the briefer record on his tombstone. These three things were all great historic acts, one of them unquestionably of the first magnitude; all absolutely disinterested, enormously valuable, uplifting humanity and harming no one. Even his admirers must admit that his political career was checkered; his executive course many times open to criticism; that his modes of expressing convictions were often ill-considered and extravagant, and often amazingly inconsistent; and his acts as a politician frequently far below the standard of the philosophical writer on government. Nevertheless, the achievements he thus ignored embody a marvellous career for the raw-boned, red-headed son of the Albemarle County farmer and land-surveyor,—or for any man, in any age. Yet, great as they were,

THOMAS JEFFERSON

they were not needed for his tombstone record. Every entry on that was of itself a sure title to the gratitude of posterity ; one of them certainly a sure title to immortality.

But if the figure I have been presenting has a head of gold, just as clearly it will be seen to have had feet of clay. There is no tyranny like that of a great idea. When once honestly entertained by a capable and sincere man, it possesses him, it obsesses him, and may lead or drive him anywhere. Mr. Jefferson honestly believed in the inalienable right of all men to life, liberty, and happiness, that governments were instituted among men to secure these, and that they derived their just powers only from the present consent of the governed. He did not see that governments were just as distinctly instituted to preserve order and protect men in their earnings, as well as their liberty, and that primarily every government must rest upon force. Carrying his own fascinating propositions to their limit, he thought the form of government should provide that the people could always and at once have their way, subject to no hindrances or delay for consideration. Whoever thought that needed was not to be trusted ; he was no friend to the liberties of the people. Consequently, Mr. Jefferson looked coldly on the Constitution of the United States as a system of concerted checks on the instant execution of the popular will, and believed the greatest danger the country was in came from the persons

THOMAS JEFFERSON

who made this Constitution. Most of them had fought for independence. He never had; but he did not hesitate to consider them now eager to enslave the country they had risked their lives to free.

In this suspicious mood it was easy to attach importance to trifles. That the first President should go to meet Congress, on its assembling, and give in person the communications concerning the state of the Union which the Constitution required of him, seemed to Mr. Jefferson a dangerous imitation of the King of England at the opening of Parliament—even though the alleged imitator was George Washington. That the first officer of the nation should not be always as accessible as a mechanic to anybody who had or fancied he had business with him was another aping of monarchical habits, and an evening reception at the White House was a distinct effort to set up a court. He knew nothing about national finance—any more than about his own; and his distrust of Alexander Hamilton, Washington's Secretary of the Treasury, led him into absurd revelations of archaic and parochial notions on the subject. He thought we were not bound to pay any debts incurred for the public service by the generation before us, and had no right to incur any debts for the benefit of the next generation. Here is his own statement: "We may consider each generation as a distinct nation, with a right by the will of its majority to bind themselves, but none to bind the succeeding

THOMAS JEFFERSON

generation, more than the inhabitants of another country. The period of a generation is determined by the laws of mortality, varying a little in different climates, but offering a general average of nineteen years. At nineteen years, then, from the date of a contract the majority of the contractors are dead and their contract with them.”¹ Later on he advanced his estimate of a generation from nineteen to thirty-four years, but extended his ideas of the impossibility of any longer binding obligation so as to include not merely debts, but laws, and even the Constitution itself! “The Constitution and the laws of their predecessors are extinguished in their natural course with those that gave them being. Every constitution, then, and every law naturally expires at the end of thirty-four years. If it be enforced longer, it is an act of force and not of right.” Such was the deliberate and carefully written opinion of the Father of the Democratic party. The greatest city of the Atlantic coast has been governed now almost continuously by his followers for a century. In spite of these Jeffersonian principles, they have created in that time a debt constituting a first mortgage on all the property in New York City for \$815,000,000!

Possessed with such wild notions, he could not mind his own business in the Cabinet, but was perpetually harassing Washington with attacks on the financial policy of the Secretary of the Treasury—

¹ *Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, edited by Paul Leicester Ford, vol. x, p. 389.

THOMAS JEFFERSON

the same policy and the same Secretary of whom Daniel Webster said, thirty-five years later: "He smote the rock of national resources, and abundant streams of revenue gushed forth. He touched the dead corpse of Public Credit, and it sprang upon its feet." Of the policy thus justly eulogized on its results by the greatest American of the next generation, Mr. Jefferson finally brought himself to write: "Hamilton's financial policy was grounded in corruption and dishonesty. It had two objects—first, as a puzzle to exclude popular understanding and inquiry; secondly, as a machine for the corruption of the legislature."¹ The lack of pure republican simplicity, as he conceived it, and the lack of sympathy with these amazing dogmas of Jeffersonian finance brought him by the end of the third Administration to the belief that, at any cost, these monarchists in disguise, the supporters of George Washington and John Adams, must be turned out of the control of the government, to preserve "our threatened liberties."

Thus the best of motives, the passion for liberty, led to the first great division of parties; to the first split in Washington's Cabinet, from which Jefferson resigned after three years' service;² and to an

¹ Ford's edition of the *Writings*, Anas, vol. i, p. 160.

² Partly owing to "incompatibility of temper," partly to a growing critical attitude toward Washington himself which was considered by some of Washington's friends positively disloyal, and partly to indiscreet and extravagant attacks like those later in the Mazzei letter. Nothing Mr. Jefferson ever wrote provoked so much censure at the time as this letter to Phillip Mazzei, an Italian gentleman with whom he had some special intimacy. Some sentences from the offensive passage in this letter follow :

THOMAS JEFFERSON

embittered war upon his old colleague and friend, John Adams, whose Presidential career he cut short at the end of one term. On the one hand were the men of the Constitution, who wished the people to rule, but also wished them to pay their debts, and carefully sought to guard against such sudden rash action as had cost the life of previous republics. On the other hand were the passionate devotees of liberty above everything, who believed that restraint

“The aspect of our politics has wonderfully changed since you left us. In place of that noble love of liberty and republican government which carried us triumphantly through the war, an Anglican monarchical and aristocratical party has sprung up, whose avowed object is to draw over us the substance, as they have already done the forms, of the British government. The main body of our citizens, however, remain true to their republican principles; the whole landed interest is republican, and so is a great mass of talents. Against us are the executive, the judiciary, two out of three branches of the legislature, all the officers of the government who want to be officers, all timid men who prefer the calm of despotism to the boisterous sea of liberty; British merchants and Americans trading on British capital, speculators and holders in the banks and public funds, a contrivance invented for the purpose of corruption, and for assimilating us in all things to the rotten as well as the sound parts of the British model. It would give you a fever were I to name to you the apostates who have gone over to these heresies, men who were Samsons in the field and Solomons in the council, but who have had their heads shorn by the harlot England.”

It was widely said that as Mr. Jefferson had been in Washington's Cabinet, General Washington regarded these declarations concerning the Executive and the tendency of his Administration as discourteous and disloyal, and called Jefferson strongly to task. Mr. Jefferson's earlier biographers have taken the greatest pains to vindicate him against these reports. A good example of the argumentative vindication may be found in *The Life of Thomas Jefferson*, by George Tucker, Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of Virginia, vol. i, pp. 517-527. A sufficient answer to all such special pleading may be found, in a note by the editor, in Ford's *Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. vii, p. 77. “The criticism on Washington in this letter was far less severe than Jefferson was writing to others in these years. Washington himself took the reference so wholly to himself that from the publication of this letter he ceased all correspondence and intercourse with his former Secretary.”

THOMAS JEFFERSON

or delay in the immediate execution of any popular demand, however hasty and ill-considered, was unrepugnant and dangerous, and meant an effort to restore the monarchy. Both were sincere; both wanted the people to rule. But the one wanted the people to have their way through the ordinary processes and safeguards of a government they themselves made, and absolutely controlled; the other wanted them to have it at any hazard and at once.

Of this last party Mr. Jefferson became inevitably the head—driven to it by the great idea of liberty, of the origin of government, and of its sole purpose, which possessed him. Hamilton, while he lived, was as inevitably the leader of the other party. He was a young man, with far less than Mr. Jefferson's advantages, and (only excepting the Declaration) with fully equal achievement. Of these rival leaders the Welshman was born to a landed estate, and a place among the ruling classes in the greatest and most influential of the colonies. His Huguenot-Scottish opponent was born to nothing, and made his own way in the world from boyhood. The Welshman early took his natural place among the legislators of his colony; the Huguenot-Scot much earlier won for himself his natural place as a leader in the stormy political agitations of the years before the Declaration, in the great city of the coast. When the war which the Declaration invited broke out, Mr. Hamilton flung himself impetuously into it, was a soldier at eighteen, a cap-

THOMAS JEFFERSON

tain of artillery in active service in the New Jersey campaign at nineteen, private secretary to the commander-in-chief at twenty, leader of his command in the assault on Cornwallis's first redoubt at Yorktown at twenty-four. Mr. Jefferson never entered the army at all. At the same age at which the one was swaying tumultuous popular meetings in New York, in all the excitements preceding the outbreak of war, the other was placidly pursuing his collegiate studies at William and Mary. At the same age at which one was following Washington in the New Jersey campaign, the other was a favorite student in the office of one of the best lawyers of his state, and was just discovering that he could not speak at all, that his only weapon was the pen. This, it must be confessed, he used relentlessly, incessantly, and with great temporary effect. For his permanent reputation it would be better if three-fourths of what he wrote had never been preserved. At thirty-eight the one had completed a wonderful career in camps, in constitution-making, and in the Cabinet, and was retiring to enter upon private life in the most exacting of the professions and to conquer his place as a great lawyer, inferior to no other in that nation of lawyers. At the age of thirty-eight the other had behind him a wonderful record, too, as Burgess of Virginia, member of the Colonial Convention and of the Continental Congress, author of the Declaration of Independence, and twice Governor of Virginia. After barely nine years in private life (all he ever had since

THOMAS JEFFERSON

boyhood) Hamilton fell in an unprovoked duel with a political opponent at the age of forty-seven. At forty-seven Jefferson had left the governorship of his native state in some discredit from his lack of executive ability, had been twice a member of the Congress at Annapolis, had spent five years in diplomatic service abroad, four of them as Minister to France, and had been Secretary of State. Before him there still lay service for one term as Vice-President of the United States, for two terms as President, and then after nearly forty years' office-holding, there yet lay seventeen years spent in retirement, and in incessant political exhortation. Still the record made by the one before he was forty contrasts not unfavorably with the record left by the other at eighty.

Mr. Jefferson was not a man of genius. We have seen that he was not an orator, not a soldier, not a good Executive, least of all a well-balanced statesman. But he was a philosophic thinker, or dreamer, and yet with a wonderfully practical gift for reading the tendencies of the populace, and for putting their wishes into persuasive and stately language. Constantly he did this so as to command political success; once he did it so that its consequences have encircled the globe and the world will remember him forever. He was at once a philosopher and a partisan. But his philosophy was sometimes ill-balanced and ill-considered; his partisanship was always adroit and carefully con-

THOMAS JEFFERSON

sidered, generally successful, and sometimes useful.

His other accomplishments were varied. It was John Adams who described how he was welcomed to the Continental Congress, "as he brought with him a reputation for literature, science, and a happy talent for composition."¹ It was whispered about that "in addition to Latin and Greek, he understood French, Italian, and Spanish, was learning German, and intended to learn Gaelic if he could get the books from Scotland, in order to read Ossian (whom he considered the greatest of poets) in the original. Besides he could calculate an eclipse, survey an estate, tie an artery, plan an edifice, try a case, break a horse, dance a minuet, and play the violin."² The last was indeed a favorite pursuit. He himself has left it on record that for twelve years of his life he played the violin for three hours every day.

I began with consideration of the large influence in the world for good of some of Mr. Jefferson's work. But I did not commend him as a uniformly sound political thinker, or as an altogether admirable man. In fact, as a political opponent he was at times ungenerous and underhanded. Even his close friend, James Madison, was constrained to apologize for his frequent extravagance and inconsistency. Madison wrote: "Allowance ought to be made for a habit in Mr. Jefferson, as in all others of great genius, of expressing in strong and round

¹ Randall's *Life*, p. 113.

² *The True Thomas Jefferson*, by William Eleroy Curtis, pp. 129, 130.

THOMAS JEFFERSON

terms impressions of the moment.”¹ A few examples may show the urgent need of this allowance, and at the same time bring his real character and its limitations into clearer relief. They will also show the absurd extravagance to which he habitually resorted, as the surest means of impressing the less intelligent voters.

He regarded Blackstone's "Commentaries" and Hume's "History of England" as pernicious. "They have made Tories," he said, "of all England, and are making Tories of those young Americans whose native feelings of independence do not place them above the wily sophistries of a Hume or a Blackstone. These two books have done more toward the suppression of the liberties of man than all the million of men in arms of Bonaparte, and the millions of human lives with the sacrifice of which he will stand loaded before the judgment seat of his Maker."² A modern sensational newspaper writer could hardly have put it stronger.

Under the sting of newspaper attack this extreme advocate of popular rights proposed the appointment of government censors for the Press, and wrote to Washington: "No government ought to be without censors. Where the Press is free no one ever will be." To Mr. Maury he described the Press as "that first of all human contrivances for generating war."³ Still to John Adams he wrote:

¹ Randall's *Life*, vol. i, p. 188.

² *Life of Thomas Jefferson*, by James Parton, p. 713.

³ *Jeffersonian Cyclophedia*, edited by John P. Foley, p. 638, par. 5957.

THOMAS JEFFERSON

“The light [from printing] has dawned on the middling classes only of the men in Europe. The kings and the rabble, of equal ignorance, have not yet received its rays; but while printing is preserved, it can no more recede than the sun return on its course.”¹ Yet again, on February 4, 1816, he wrote to James Monroe, thanking him for private letters, and saying: “From forty years’ experience of the wretched guesswork of the newspapers of what is not done in open daylight, and of their falsehood even as to that, I rarely think them worth reading and almost never worth notice.”² Here at least was a politician with a courage of his convictions quite rare among his class at the present day!

No man made more phrases about the absolute right of every man to govern himself; but in the constitution which he wrote for Virginia he required a landed property qualification for voters, a quarter of an acre in towns, or twenty-five acres in the country. He praised a constitution of Spain, “which after a certain epoch disfranchises every citizen who cannot read and write.”³ To a Frenchman, the Abbé Arnond, he wrote: “The people are not qualified to legislate. With us therefore they only choose the legislators.”⁴ To Lafayette he wrote: “A full measure of liberty is not now perhaps to be expected by your nation, nor am I confident they

¹ Ford’s edition of the *Writings*, vol. x, p. 270.

² *Ibid.*, p. 18.

³ Curtis, p. 292.

⁴ Foley’s *Jeffersonian Cyclopaedia*, p. 492, par. 4599.

THOMAS JEFFERSON

are prepared to preserve it. More than a generation will be requisite, under the application of reasonable laws, favoring the progress of knowledge in the great mass of the people, and their habituation to an independent security of person and property, before they will be capable of estimating the value of freedom and the necessity of a sacred adherence to the principles on which it rests for preservation. Instead of that liberty which takes root and growth in the progress of reason, if recovered by mere force or accident, it becomes with an unprepared people a tyranny still, of the many, the few, or the one.”¹ And in curious contrast with his political descendants, who now wish to have the decisions of the highest courts reviewed or even reversed at popular elections, he said bluntly: “The people are not qualified to judge questions of law.”² To M. Coray he wrote: “Modern times have discovered the only device by which the people’s rights can be secured, to wit: Government by the people, acting not in person, but by representatives chosen by themselves—that is to say, by every man of ripe years and sane mind, who either contributes by his purse or his person to the support of his country.”³ He reconciled his personal feeling with holding office almost continuously for forty years; but when he became President he was vehemently in favor of rotation in office, and was the author of the doctrine that “to the victors belong the spoils.”

¹ Foley’s *Jeffersonian Cyclopaedia*, p. 501, par. 4701.

² *Ibid.*, p. 451, par. 4205.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 388, par. 3530.

THOMAS JEFFERSON

He exhorted Albert Gallatin to "put down the banks; and if this country cannot be carried through the longest war against the most powerful enemy without ever knowing the want of a dollar, without dependence on the traitorous classes of her citizens, without bearing hard on the resources of the people, or loading the public with an infamous burden of debt, I know nothing of my countrymen."¹ "In perfect and universal free trade" he discovered another of "the natural rights of men. I am for free commerce with all nations, political connections with none, and little or no diplomatic establishment." And yet he wished to confine the great general government solely to foreign affairs—to be thus conducted without diplomatic establishment! Every other subject of public concern, excepting solely foreign affairs, he wished left to the independent states. Nine-tenths of the present useful activities of the general government would thus have been destroyed at one stroke. He was opposed to building up manufacturing establishments. "Let our workshops remain in Europe." In a letter to John Jay he wrote: "I consider the class of artificers as panderers of vice and the instruments by which the liberties of a country are generally overthrown."² He even considered yellow fever a providential blessing because "it will discourage the growth of great cities in our nation, and I view these great cities as pestilential to the morals, to the health, and to the liberties of man-

¹ Curtis, pp. 295, 296.

² *Ibid.*, p. 90.

THOMAS JEFFERSON

kind.”¹ He wrote that he was “not a friend to a very energetic government. It was always oppressive.” Elsewhere he declared, “A free government is of all others the most energetic.” He was so steeped in the French ideas of universal equality and the importance of addressing everybody merely as “Citizen” that he wrote: “I hope that the terms Excellency, Honor, Worship, Esquire, will forever disappear from among us. I wish that of Mister to follow them.”²

His hostility to the Constitution was not concealed. To John Adams he said: “I confess there are things in it which stagger all my dispositions to subscribe to what such an assembly has proposed. The President seems a bad edition of a Polish king.”³ To James Madison he said: “The second feature I dislike, and what I strongly dislike is the abandonment, in every instance, of the principle of rotation in office.”⁴ With characteristic inconsistency he afterward wrote to James Madison in 1809, “No Constitution was ever before so well calculated as ours for extensive empire and self-government.” Yet to the same man he had written, from the midst of the French Revolution, deprecating the idea that Shays’s Rebellion constituted a reason for hastening the adoption of the Constitution, or making it a strong one. “God forbid,” he exclaimed, “that we should be twenty years without a rebellion. We have had thirteen states inde-

¹ Curtis, p. 91.

² *Ibid.*, p. 303.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 81.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 81.

THOMAS JEFFERSON

pendent for eleven years. There has been but one rebellion. That comes to one rebellion in a century and a half for each state. What country ever existed a century and a half without a rebellion? What signifies a few lives lost in a century or two? The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time with the blood of patriots and tyrants.”¹ And finally he referred to the Constitution “as a kite sent up to keep the hen-yard in order.”

Afterward he became a stickler for the exact terms of the Constitution. When the question of the purchase of Louisiana first arose, apparently he did not think of the Constitution at all. Then he frankly admitted that the Constitution gave him no authority to purchase Louisiana,² and wrote to

¹ Curtis, p. 81.

² “Mr. Jefferson admitted that he could find nowhere in the Constitution authority to buy foreign territory. He believed that such a purchase would be beyond the precedent even of Mr. Hamilton’s ‘implied powers,’ and wished a constitutional amendment passed to make good what his representatives had done, and he could not decline to accept. ‘I had rather ask an enlargement of power from the *nation*, when it is found necessary,’ he said, ‘than to assume it by a construction which would make our powers boundless. Our peculiar security is in the possession of a written Constitution. Let us not make it a blank paper by construction.’ But in the same breath with which he urged his scruple he declared his readiness to abandon it. ‘If our friends think differently,’ he said, ‘certainly I shall acquiesce with satisfaction, confiding that the good sense of our country will correct the evil of construction when it shall produce ill effects.’ . . . The President acquiesced with startling facility in the apparent ‘necessity of shutting up the Constitution’ in such exigent cases of imperative policy. . . . He stickled for a strict construction of the Constitution only when he thought that a strict construction would safeguard the rights of common men and keep the old Federalist theories of government at arm’s length. . . . He wanted as little governing from the Federal capital as might be. . . . It was his weakness to think it safe for the friends of the people to make a ‘blank paper’ of the Constitution, but the very gate of revolution for those who

THOMAS JEFFERSON

his political friends asking them to keep quiet about the constitutional question.¹ In the same spirit he was most rigid about expenditures of public money, but always found ways to use it for new ends, like the purchase of Louisiana, which he had at heart.

He was the author of the Kentucky resolutions, which supported the extremist doctrine of state rights and justified nullification; and yet he wrote elsewhere that "when any one state in the American Union refuses obedience to the Confederation to which they have bound themselves, the rest have the natural right to compel it to obedience."² Surely here are enough inconsistencies and extravagances to show the need for Mr. Madison's plea that "allowance be made for them." In most of them he was absolutely sincere. But no sketch of his career or estimate of his character would be honest without some mention of others for which such an excuse cannot be offered.

His ordinary way of life was that of a rich, cultivated country gentleman. His political pose was that of a farmer, eager for plain living like the common people. But his plain living required the best house in Virginia, with a whole mountain for

were not Democrats. If only Democrats led, 'the good sense of the country would correct the evil of construction when it should produce ill effects'!" *A History of the American People*," by Woodrow Wilson, vol. iii, pp. 182, 183. The author of these significant comments is the present official head of the party which Mr. Jefferson founded, and so long controlled, and is the President of the United States.

¹ Foley's *Jeffersonian Cyclopaedia*, pp. 510, 511, pars. 4806, 4809, 4811.

² Curtis, p. 302.

THOMAS JEFFERSON

its site, surrounded by ten thousand acres of land, which he owned and his slaves cultivated for him. It also required a French cook, with the best wines and sweetmeats specially imported for his use. His ordinary dress was such as became his station, and when he was Minister in France he was admired for his courteous manners no less than for his charming hospitality. But when he became President, for reasons not hard to conjecture, he lapsed into ostentatious slovenliness and bad manners, especially when dealing with the representatives of foreign countries. He sharply criticised the social demeanor of Washington and Adams, his predecessors, and professed for himself a great eagerness for "republican simplicity" and an earnest desire to escape "the glare of royalty and nobility."

All this affectation presently brought him into trouble with no less a personage than the new British Minister, who thus reported it:

"I called on Mr. Madison, who accompanied me officially to introduce me to the President. We went together to the Mansion House, I being in full official costume, as the etiquette of my place required on such a formal introduction of a Minister of Great Britain to the President of the United States. On arriving at the hall of audience we found it empty, at which Mr. Madison seemed surprised, and proceeded to an entry leading to the President's study. I followed him, supposing that the introduction was to take place in an adjoining room. At this moment Mr. Jefferson entered the entry at the other end, and all three of us were packed in the narrow space, from which, to make room, I was obliged to back out. In this awkward

THOMAS JEFFERSON

position my introduction to the President was made by Mr. Madison.

“Mr. Jefferson’s appearance soon explained to me that the general circumstances of my reception had not been accidental but studied. I, in my official costume, found myself, at the hour of reception he had himself appointed, introduced to a man as the President of the United States, not merely in an undress, but actually standing in slippers down at the heels and both pantaloons, coat and underclothes indicative of utter slovenliness and indifference to appearances, and in a state of negligence actually studied.”¹

About the same time he formally introduced in his official dinners at the White House the rule that there should be no precedence and no assignment of seats—that people should go in as they liked and take what seats they could find. Both the British and Spanish Ministers officially reported offensive situations in which they found themselves involved through this rule. Ultimately the diplomatic corps held a meeting on the subject to express their resentment, and the French Minister wrote Talleyrand that “Washington society is turned upside down.” Mr. Jefferson found himself so annoyed by the bearing of the Spanish Minister, Señor Yrujo, that he asked his recall, and had to submit to a snub from the Spanish government, which took no notice of his request. Such and other troubles in which this affected “simplicity of life” involved him were probably what led to his complete reversal of these habits toward the middle of his second

¹ Parton’s *Life*, p. 619.

THOMAS JEFFERSON

Administration. From that time he became again the courtly host and courteous gentleman of Monticello or of the French mission.

Mr. Jefferson's expressions of opinion concerning England were so conflicting at different periods as to suggest that they were uncandid and for a purpose. Thus he wrote at one time: "No two countries upon earth have so many points of common interest and friendship; and their rulers must be great bunglers indeed if with such dispositions they break them asunder."¹ At another time, only a few months before the Declaration, he wrote: "There is not in the British Empire a man who more cordially loves a union with Great Britain than I do."² Some years later he wrote to Mr. Monroe, "We have more reason to hate England than any nation on earth,"³ and to William Carmichael, "I considered the English as our natural enemy, and as the only nation on earth that wish us ill from the bottom of their souls." And to Lafayette, "England's selfish principles render her incapable of honorable patronage or disinterested coöperation." Then he discovered that Napoleon had outwitted him in securing from Spain the re-cession of Louisiana; and instantly he was in love again with England. He wrote to Livingston in France: "The day that France takes possession of New Orleans . . . seals the union of two nations who, in conjunction, can maintain exclusive possession of the ocean.

¹ Ford's edition of the *Writings*, vol. iii, p. 404.

² Randall's *Life*, vol. i, p. 123.

³ Curtis, p. 197.

THOMAS JEFFERSON

From that moment we must marry ourselves to the British fleet and nation.”¹

He was unjustly accused of irreligion. He had asked James Madison “whether the liberties of a nation could be thought secure when we have removed their only firm basis, a conviction in the minds of the people that these liberties are of the gift of God.” In fact, no man had deeper religious feeling—or a greater variety of religious belief. He was born in and adhered for a time to his parish church (Episcopal) in Virginia. At one time he wanted to bring over the Calvinistic University from Geneva, with all its professors, and use it as the basis for the University of Virginia. At another time he wished to do the same with the equally Calvinistic University of Edinburgh, and urged the legislature of Virginia to pay the expense of the transfer of the entire faculty and assume the responsibility of their support “for the good of our country in general and the promotion of science.” These two universities he then regarded as pre-eminent in all Europe. Later (when he was past eighty, and had by this time become a Unitarian), he denounced Calvinism in his usual vehement way. “The five points of Calvinism,” he wrote, “were a blasphemous absurdity—the hocus-pocus phantasm of a God created by Calvin which, like another Cerberus, had one body and three heads.” It would be more pardonable, he said, “to believe in no God at all than to blaspheme Him by the

¹ *A History of the American People*, by Woodrow Wilson, vol. iii, p. 180.

THOMAS JEFFERSON

atrocious attributes of Calvin.”¹ Such utterances doubtless explain the frequent charge of irreligion. He never outgrew the vulgar and ill-bred habit of sneering at conscientious beliefs he could not at the moment share—never learned that only a boor could insult the religious convictions of anybody.

In 1816, when already out of public life, he allowed a pamphlet, issued by Dr. Lyman Beecher, to draw him into some remarkable expressions, addressed first to an unknown northern correspondent, the more extreme statements then taken out, and sent to the editor of “The Richmond Enquirer,” with the request for their publication, the authorship to be carefully concealed. In the letter asking this, he describes Dr. Beecher’s pamphlet as “the most bold and impudent stride New England has ever taken in arrogating an ascendancy over the rest of the Union.” He wrote: “I am not afraid of the priests. They have tried upon me all their various batteries, of pious whining, hypocritical canting, lying and slandering, without being able to give me one moment of pain. I have contemplated their order from the Magi of the East to the saints of the West, and I have found no difference of character, but of more or less caution, in proportion to the information or ignorance of those on whom their interested duperies were to be paid off. Their sway in New England is indeed formidable. The nation must be awaked to save

¹ Curtis, pp. 324, 325.

THOMAS JEFFERSON

itself by its own exertions or we are undone. . . . I hope your trumpet [“The Richmond Enquirer”] will make itself heard.”¹

Virginia, whose superior religious enlightenment was vaunted in this same letter, had early made it penal in parents to refuse to have their children baptized; had prohibited the unlawful assembling of Quakers; had made it penal for any master of a vessel to bring any Quaker into the state, and ordered those already there and such as came thereafter to be imprisoned until they should abjure; had provided a mild punishment for their first and second returns, but death for their third; had prohibited all persons from suffering their meetings in or near their houses or importing books which supported their tenets. These facts had been recorded by Jefferson himself in his “Notes on Virginia,”² and, besides, it had tasked his own early zeal to carry the statute for religious freedom in the colony. It is idle, then, to regard these wild expressions as the serious convictions about religion or religions of either a philosopher or a statesman. They were merely the petulant spleen of a man harassed by political attack and newspaper abuse—or perhaps the pose of a politician to affect his followers—the same politician who thought it desirable to transform himself from a gentleman to an uncouth boor in order to receive foreign Ministers in due “republican simplicity.”

¹ Ford's edition of the *Writings*, vol. x, pp. 12-14.

² Page 167, edition of 1788.

THOMAS JEFFERSON

One of the most inexcusable features in his political struggles was his use of the blackmailers, Callender, Freneau, and others, in his vindictive warfare against Hamilton. The most miserable scandal of that whole period was a scurrilous attack upon Hamilton's private morals and official integrity, prepared and published by Callender. Some historians have even asserted that it was submitted by him to Jefferson for approval before its publication, as were attacks by other blackmailers. Mr. Jefferson knew, at any rate, with whom he was dealing, for the man had already been in prison, and he had pardoned him. He soon received a just punishment, for Callender turned upon him and slandered him more villainously even than he had slandered Hamilton, on the same lines, and with as little cause.

No account of the man's great career is complete or honest which does not make some mention of these odious details; but it is time to turn to another and more agreeable side of him, as revealed in his personal relations to his political associates, to his followers, and his intimate friends, in the times that tried men's souls. He rarely lost a friend or a follower. The foibles and even the follies and worse that have been mentioned were known, but did not deprive him of the enthusiastic admiration of the great party which long ruled the country. They did not even detract materially from the affectionate regard in which he came to be held by all who remembered the Revolutionary

THOMAS JEFFERSON

struggle. Some placed him next to Washington and Franklin; some placed him beside John Adams. Most Americans counted him in the first half-dozen of "the Revolutionary Fathers."

In his family circle he was adored. Everything indicates that he was the most affectionate of husbands and the most devoted of parents. In a period of storm and attack from unexpected quarters his wife wrote of him: "He is so good himself, he cannot understand how bad others can be." His neighbors were all his friends. They probably knew that the real character of the man (however variable it might sometimes seem) was revealed in this brief letter, written at the request of a man who had named a son after him: "I am sensible of the mark of esteem manifested by the name you have given your son. Tell him from me that he must consider as essentially belonging to it, to love his friends and wish no ill of his enemies." His county and his state kept him in office as long as possible, and seemed always eager for his advice in every emergency. To them he was the one unquestioned political authority; and his influence was scarcely shaken even by the disastrous failure of his embargo policy or the pitiful results from his hatred of the navy. In fact, he had a genius for persuading, not merely his friends, but a majority of the voters, that his judgment was infallible and that their liberties were only safe while he was on guard to sound the first alarm.

Another letter to a namesake gives a more touch-

THOMAS JEFFERSON

ing revelation of character. It was not to be opened till the old man had passed away:

“This letter will, to you, be as one from the dead. The writer will be in the grave before you can weigh its counsels. Your affectionate and excellent father has requested that I would address to you something which might possibly have a favorable influence upon the course of life you have to run; and I, too, as a namesake, feel an interest in that course. Few words will be necessary with good dispositions on your part. Adore God. Reverence and cherish your parents. Love your neighbor as yourself, and your country more than yourself. Be just. Be true. Murmur not of the ways of Providence. So shall the life into which you have entered be the portal to one of eternal and ineffable bliss. And if to the dead it is permitted to care for the things of this world, every action of your life will be under my regard. Farewell.

TH. JEFFERSON.

*Monticello, Feb. 21st, 1825.*¹

On the Fourth of July, 1826, John Adams was slowly dying, amid the noisy rejoicing, already universal over every recurrence of the great anniversary. In a final effort to make himself understood by the family, this old and fervid friend and opponent whispered, “Thomas Jefferson still lives.” They were Adams’s last words, and they were prophetic. That strange medley of inconsistency, extravagance, enthusiasm, and fervid patriotic devotion to whom he referred had in fact passed away a few hours earlier. But the author of the statute for religious liberty in Virginia and of the Declara-

¹ Ford’s edition of the *Writings*, vol. x, p. 340.

THOMAS JEFFERSON

tion of Independence, the founder of the University of Virginia, and the purchaser of Louisiana “still lives” in the respectful memory of the world and in the affection of the people of the continent he served. I venture to appropriate for him the lines of Shelley—

“till the Future dares
Forget the Past, his fate and fame shall be
An echo and a light unto eternity.”

EDMUND BURKE

EDMUND BURKE

WHAT a story of the great Georgian and Victorian times might be reconstructed from the tablets in memory of former residents, which have been set up in the streets of Bath! The town has been a haunt of great men; the very air is filled yet with the shadows of the mighty. Foremost in the civic record comes the masterful Chatham, and hard after, his yet more masterful son. Then is commemorated the stay in Bath of Britain's greatest sailor, Lord Nelson, and of British soldiers who won imperishable renown in two remote continents, Lord Clive in Asia, General Wolfe in America. The town has cherished, likewise, the memories of residents of gentler fame. On the North Parade, as tablets show, dwelt Goldsmith, whom to this day, all men love, and Wordsworth, whom all admire. On the South Parade is seen a tribute to the best novelist Britain had to that time produced, Sir Walter Scott, and there is place for another to one of the greatest men of letters she ever had, Samuel Johnson. The other novelists remembered in Bath range from Henry Fielding and Jane Austen to Charles Dickens; and the poets from George Crabbe to Thomas Moore and Walter Savage Landor; while with impartial hands there have been placed tablets also for Gainsborough, the artist, Quin, the actor, and Herschel, the astronomer.

And yet, in all this brilliant galaxy, the greatest,

EDMUND BURKE

Edmund Burke, was left to the last. He was more nearly the town's own, too, than many of the others. It was in Bath that he found his devoted wife. Perhaps the most fruitful period of his great public career he spent as the representative in the House of Commons for the neighboring people of Bristol. To Bath he came repeatedly for rest and enjoyment; and came, too, when he knew the shadow of death was upon him. In the house which now has its tablet he spent the last month in which any activity was left him, and he only quitted it for the serene and beautiful death-bed at Beaconsfield.¹

Have I gone too far in rating him the greatest yet commemorated in Bath? It is not so far as Macaulay went. He said quite simply that Edmund Burke was "the greatest man then living," and,

¹ The day before Mr. Burke left Bath, for the last time, May 23, 1797, he sent a letter to Mrs. Leadbeater, written by another hand, but with a tremulous signature from his own, saying: "I feel as I ought to do your constant hereditary kindness to me and mine. What you have heard of my illness is far from exaggerated. I am, thank God, alive, and that is all. Hastening to dissolution, I have to bless Providence that I do not suffer a great deal of pain. . . . I have been at Bath these four months to no purpose, and am therefore to be removed to my own house at Beaconsfield tomorrow, to be nearer to an habitation more permanent, humbly and fearfully hoping that my better part may find a better mansion."

The same day he sent a letter to Arthur Young, beginning as follows: "I am on the point of leaving Bath, having no further hope of benefit from these waters; and as soon as I get home, (if I should live to get home,) if I should find the papers transmitted me by your board, I shall send them faithfully to you, though, to say the truth, I do not think them of very great importance. My constant opinion was, and is, that all matters relative to labour ought to be left to the conventions of the parties; that the great danger is, in governments intermeddling too much."

EDMUND BURKE

again, "the greatest man since Milton." We may be sure the eminent historian and almost omniscient scholar and critic forgot neither of two other great men then living, William Pitt or Charles James Fox, when he deliberately chose that superlative. It is not so far as Grenville went, when he said that Burke is to politics what Shakespeare is to the moral world. In considering that eulogium, however, I must confess that, while recognizing the propriety of coupling the names, I have often been puzzled to know whether Grenville meant that politics had nothing to do with morals, or merely that Shakespeare had nothing to do with politics. It is not so far as Mackintosh went, who considered Burke "without a parallel in any age or country, unless with Cicero and Lord Bacon." There is an estimate by Lord Morley which I would also like to quote. He said that Burke's "is one of the greatest names in the history of political literature. No one that ever lived used the general ideas of the thinker more successfully than Burke, the particular problems of the statesman. He was one of the great masters of the high and difficult art of elaborate composition."

This last indeed has been one of the complaints against him. Even now we hear occasionally from some Parliamentary authority, whose own speeches no doubt have their effect at the moment, but are found a few years later as dry as last year's prairie grass and as unreadable as a table of logarithms, that Mr. Burke would never do for the

practical House of Commons of these times—he is too rhetorical and ornate. It may be so; it is not for me to defend the taste of the day in political discussions. But what could be terser, what could go more directly like an arrow to the heart of the matter in hand, than many of the epigrammatic sentences which sprinkle almost every page of his speeches. Take a very familiar example: “It looks to me narrow and pedantic to apply the ordinary ideas of criminal justice to this great public contest. I do not know the method of drawing up an indictment against a whole people.” Has any recent orator, free from the alleged fault of too much rhetoric, condensed into fewer and more cogent words the argument against an historic error in the statesmanship of more than one land? Or take another example: “Gentlemen say that America is an object well worth fighting for. Certainly it is, if fighting a people be the best way of gaining them.” Or again: “Nobody shall persuade me, when a whole people are concerned, that acts of lenity are not means of conciliation.” Or again, take the pregnant sentence into which he put the whole philosophy of his opposition to the French Revolution: “Whenever a separation is made between liberty and justice, neither is in my opinion safe.” Or again, take his whimsical expression of his dislike for the employment of Hessian soldiers against English colonists: “I fairly acknowledge I have not yet learned to delight in finding Fort Kniphausen in the heart of the British dominions.” Or again, his candid estimate of the

EDMUND BURKE

success these Hessians gained: "You have the ground they encamp on, and you have no more." Or again, in resisting the reactionary tendencies which would have carried the rule of George III back to the standard of Charles I: "The people of England were then, as they are now, called upon to make government strong. They thought it a great deal better to make it wise and honest." Or, to take a final example, what could better expose the imbecility of the proposal to treat privateering as piracy, and service in the colonial army as treason, and to enforce against both where opportunity offered, the penalties in the statute of Henry VIII, than his scornful phrase: "They think the defeats in America can be compensated by the triumphs of Tyburn." If illuminating flashes like these are a fault in political discussion, they are at least a fault not too common among the public men of our day. Would that more debates were "too ornate and rhetorical" after this convincing fashion.

Mr. Burke illustrated conspicuously another quality not too common among public men. He scorned to pander to the prejudices of his constituents, or bow to every gust of changing opinion, in order to hold their vote. Even when first a candidate in Bristol, he took pains to make it clear that he would not recognize their instructions as always binding his action. "Your representative owes you," he exclaimed, "not his industry only, but his judgment; and he betrays, instead of serving you, if he sacrifices that to your opinion." Later,

EDMUND BURKE

when this attitude had excited discontent, he told them if they did not permit their member to act upon a very enlarged view of things, they would at length infallibly degrade their national representation into a confused and scuffling bustle of local agency. He knew efforts had been made to injure him in their eyes, but "the use of character is to be a shield against calumny." "I could not have served you as I have done," he proudly added to the electors, "and court you too. I canvassed you through your affairs and not your persons. You must look to the whole tenor of your member's conduct."

It proved in the end too much to hope for, even in a city like Bristol and with a man like Burke. Yet Bristol may well be proud of the wisdom that chose Burke as its representative during that part of his public service which time has most thoroughly vindicated, and can join with us in admiring the fine and calm dignity with which he accepted his ultimate dismissal. He rejoiced that the justice of his course whether as to Ireland or America was no longer in doubt. "No," he exclaimed, "the charges against me are all of one kind, that I pushed the principles of general justice and benevolence too far, farther than a cautious policy would warrant, and farther than the opinions of many would go along with me. In every accident which may happen through life, in pain, in sorrow, in depression, and distress, I will call to mind this accusation and be comforted." If his lofty shade

EDMUND BURKE

takes any cognizance now of human affairs, he may read what these communities themselves think of that accusation in the Bristol statue and the Bath tablet.

Naturally, Mr. Burke never reached high office. He was a party man, and most useful and highly prized as such; but not what the managers call a safe party man; and he had the defects of his oratorical temperament. It is not necessary to dwell on these; but it ought always to be said when they are mentioned, that even his failings leaned to virtue's side. He shone in every field where his abilities were exerted, and left a great record in many—in economical reform, in defence of the principles underlying the Revolution of 1688; in tender care for the land of his birth and the Church of his mother; in resistance alike to the reactionary policy of the ministry, to injustice in India, and to the destructive tendencies of the French Revolution. But I may be pardoned for thinking that the highest service of his whole illustrious career, the most courageous at the time, the wisest, the most far-seeing, was found in his outspoken sympathy with the American colonists, and in his protracted and unflinching resistance to the measures which brought about the American Revolution.

No other man in England, hardly one even in America, saw quite so clearly as Edmund Burke that after an unwise ministry had forced the col-

EDMUND BURKE

onists into a long war in defence of the English principle of no taxation without representation, the only possible outcome of the war by which the real England could succeed was an American victory. Yet no other deprecated the struggle so much; no other at the outset more sincerely desired to preserve the authority of Parliament and the just rights of the crown. He even admitted the precedents, both in Great Britain and in the colonies, for taxation without representation. But when once the right was determinedly challenged, he frankly recognized that, as he put it in lawyer-like phrase, "the assertion of the title would be the loss of the suit." While there was still a chance to draw back, he pleaded with the ministry and with Parliament: "It is our business to rule, not to wrangle. It is poor compensation to triumph in a dispute, whilst we lose an empire." "Your ancestors," he exclaimed, "did at length open their eyes to the ill-husbandry of injustice. They found that the tyranny of a free people could of all tyrannies the least be endured." And then he reminded the ministry that, while reciting the entire and perfect authority of the crown, its predecessors had nevertheless, with the approval of the crown, given successively to various English communities and also to the Welsh all the rights and privileges of English subjects. "Are not the colonists," he demanded, "as much Englishmen as the Welsh?" By such steps he came to regard the struggle as not a rebellion, but a civil war, in which English-

EDMUND BURKE

men in the colonies fought for old English rights, and in gaining these rights for themselves made them henceforth forever secure for England, too.

In fact, upon this common English heritage he grounded his appeals: "This fierce spirit of liberty," he told Parliament, "is stronger in the English colonies, probably, than in any other people of the earth. They are not only devoted to liberty, but to liberty according to English ideas and on English principles." And again, "We cannot falsify, I fear, the pedigree of this fierce people, and persuade them that they are not sprung from a nation in whose veins the blood of freedom circulates. The language in which they would hear you tell them this tale would detect the imposition; your speech would betray you. An Englishman is the unfittest person on earth to argue another Englishman into slavery." He made his plea unanswerable by grounding it upon undisputed historical facts: "The feelings of the colonies were formerly the feelings of Great Britain. They were formerly the feelings of Mr. Hampden, when called upon for the payment of twenty shillings." And later on in the discussion he uttered the prophetic warning, "English colonies must be had on these terms, or no had at all." What Mr. Burke constantly sought, in the American business, while it was possible, was reconciliation. His most important utterance during the long debate, from the Stamp Act to the Declaration of Independence, was entitled "Conciliation with America," and English oratory contains no

EDMUND BURKE

more powerful or persuasive plea for peace. A month after the momentous Declaration, he wrote: "We are deep in blood. God knows how it will be. I do not see how I can wish success to those whose victory is to separate from us a large and noble part of our empire; still less do I wish success to injustice, oppression and absurdity."

This sheer mental inability to support injustice was the key to his whole conduct in American affairs—to his whole conduct, indeed, in every public affair. It is this which makes his discussions of old eighteenth century issues a vivid and vital part of the English literature still cherished in the twentieth century. Their great value was and is that he constantly looked to enduring principles for light on current problems. That was the crowning trait in the wonderful equipment which made him the greatest orator of his country, and its most splendid writer on public affairs—the only man, as a critic of the day said, who had combined the two qualities in like perfection since Cicero. Such rank he won, by contemporary judgment and by that of posterity, in an epoch of great men and great deeds—the greatest, as Lord Rosebery has somewhere observed, in the history of the world up to that time, since the coming of Christ.

I have not mentioned what many may now consider his highest claim on grateful remembrance. He is the author of the successful imperial policy

EDMUND BURKE

of Great Britain. The ablest imperialist of to-day could not state it more clearly or comprehensively than Burke did:

“My hold of the colonies is in the close affection which grows from common names, from kindred blood, from similar privileges, and equal protection. These are ties which, though light as air, are as strong as links of iron. Let the colonies always keep the idea of their civil rights associated with your government; — they will cling and grapple to you; and no force under heaven will be of power to tear them from their allegiance. But let it be once understood that your government may be one thing, and their privileges another; that these two things may exist without any mutual relation; the cement is gone; the cohesion is loosened; and everything hastens to decay and dissolution. As long as you have the wisdom to keep the sovereign authority of this country as the sanctuary of liberty, the sacred temple consecrated to our common faith, wherever the chosen race and sons of England worship freedom, they will turn their faces towards you. The more they multiply, the more friends you will have; the more ardently they love liberty, the more perfect will be their obedience. . . . Deny them this participation of freedom, and you break the sole bond, which originally made, and must still preserve, the unity of the empire. . . . It is the spirit of the English constitution, which, infused through the mighty mass, pervades, feeds, unites, invigorates, vivifies, every part of the empire, even down to the minutest member.”

The policy thus outlined was rejected by the monarch of the day with disastrous results. It has since been accepted with fervor and fidelity by his grand-

EDMUND BURKE

daughter and his great-grandson. Under their beneficent reigns the British Empire has grown to deserve, far more fully even than when it was uttered, the familiar eulogy by the great Massachusetts Senator: "A power which has dotted over the surface of the whole globe with her possessions and military posts, whose morning drum-beat, following the sun, and keeping company with the hours, circles the earth with one continuous and unbroken strain of the martial airs of England." The earth is still circled with these, but now also with sweeter strains—those rising from the common language, common institutions, and common aims and aspirations of a reconciled race, carrying civilization to the remotest parts of the earth, and making more and more for universal peace.

I have only one thing to add. The colonists whom Burke befriended were after all but a feeble folk, less than three millions, scattered along the eastern fringe of a continent, with the ocean on one hand and a savage wilderness on the other. They have since subdued the wilderness, overspread the continent, and stretched out in either hemisphere to the islands of the sea. It has been a high privilege, on Burke's threshold, to utter the voice, feebly and inadequately, it may be, but the authentic voice, of that people of now nearly ninety million souls in reverent and affectionate gratitude for the memory, the undying memory, of their foremost friend in Great Britain.

THE SCOT IN AMERICA AND
THE ULSTER SCOT

THE SCOT IN AMERICA AND THE ULSTER SCOT

NO man may presume to depreciate either the Puritan or the Cavalier. But, when they are praised—as they must be forever while heroism and great achievements are honored among the generations of men—the praise should be for what they did, rather than for what they conspicuously did not do. The Puritan did not seek a new world to establish liberty of conscience—far from it. He only sought a world where he could impose his own conscience on everybody else. The Cavalier did not seek a new world where he could establish universal freedom. He only sought freedom for himself. Even for the early Scottish emigrants sent out to him he had no use save as bondservants. Later on he found them also useful as Presidents. Neither the Puritan nor the Cavalier went to America in resistance to tyranny. The Puritans who sought to resist tyranny stayed in England, in the army with Fairfax, while those who felt otherwise went to the colonies. The Cavaliers in the main left England for America when the Commonwealth army had defeated them. Neither the Puritan nor the Cavalier, when at liberty to work out their own ideals, established popular government in the New World, though the Puritans were much farther from it than the Cavaliers. Under the Puritans, no man could vote unless he were a church member, and in good standing with the

THE SCOT IN AMERICA AND

church authorities. Under the Cavaliers, piety may not have been so essential, but freedom from any debt for service was, and no man, even no white man, could vote without it.

The Puritans, as we have seen, did not seek a land of religious freedom, nor did they make one. They drove Roger Williams out because he was a Baptist. They tried Quakers for heresy, bored holes in their tongues with hot irons, and if after this any confiding Quaker trusted himself again to the religious freedom of the colony, they hanged him. They tried old women for witchcraft, and hanged them. As late as 1692, Cotton Mather himself rode from Boston to Salem to witness the hanging of another minister, George Burroughs, for the crime of not believing in witchcraft, and according to most authorities not only approved but actively encouraged the atrocity.¹ If we should be inclined, however, to judge the Rev. Mr. Mather harshly for this, and by modern standards, let us remember

¹ John Fiske: *New France and New England*, p. 170 (New York, 1904) ; Appleton's *Cyclopædia of American Biography*, vol. i, p. 470 ; Bancroft's *History*, vol. i, p. 451, vol. iii, pp. 72, 84, 88, 93, 97 (Boston, 1867-68) ; Edmund Burke: *European Settlements in America* ; John Fiske: *Beginnings of New England* (New York, 1898), pp. 208-218.

Charles Francis Adams, in *Massachusetts: its Historians and its History*, says on this point: "The trouble with the historical writers who have taken upon themselves the defence of the founders of Massachusetts is that they have tried to sophisticate away the facts. . . . But there that record is: and it will not out. Roger Williams, John Wheelwright, and Anne Hutchinson come back from their banishment, and stand there as witnesses; the Quakers and Baptists, with eyes that forever glare, swing from the gallows or turn about at the cart's tail. In Spain it was the dungeon, the rack, and the fagot; in Massachusetts it was banishment, the whip, and the gibbet. In neither case can the records be obliterated."

THE ULSTER SCOT

the fact that some time afterward the same Cotton Mather was decorated with the degree of Doctor of Divinity by the University of Glasgow!

Neither Puritans nor Cavaliers led in the struggle for freedom of speech and of the press. That honor belongs to a Scot, Andrew Hamilton, who went in 1695 from Edinburgh to America, where he rose to be attorney-general of Pennsylvania. Forty years after his arrival he defended the New York printer, Zenger, in a trial for libel on the royal governor, which was construed as libel on the king. The colonist from Edinburgh defied official threats, resisted the bitterly unfriendly court, and by his impassioned eloquence fairly wrested an acquittal from the jury, and secured the freedom of speech and of the press ever since enjoyed in America—sometimes, perhaps, over-enjoyed.¹

Neither Puritans nor Cavaliers began the demand for “no taxation without representation” which became the shibboleth of the Revolution. The principle thus formulated appeared first in 1740 in the controversy between the Provincial Assembly of Pennsylvania and the governor and the proprietary party. The substance of the long discussion in the Assembly was that as the king claims no power of levying taxes without the consent of Parliament, there should be no taxation without representation.²

¹ *Documentary History of New York*, vol. iv, pp. 1037-1059.

² *Proceedings of Pennsylvania Historical Society*, 1882, “Pennsylvania’s Formative Influence upon Federal Institutions,” by William A. Wallace.

THE SCOT IN AMERICA AND

Neither Puritan nor Cavalier kindled the popular flame for independence. Two years before James Otis's famous speech in the Boston Town House in 1761, Patrick Henry, a Scot, had done that in Virginia, in the defence against the noted "Parsons' Cause." Here he maintained the indisputable right of Virginia to make laws for herself, arraigned the king for annulling a salutary ordinance in the sole interest of a favored class, and said, "by such acts a king, instead of being the Father of his people, degenerates into a tyrant and forfeits all right to obedience." The Court exclaimed "Treason," but the jury brought in its verdict against Patrick Henry's clients for one penny, and thus "the fire in Virginia" began.¹ It may be interesting to remember that the mother of the orator who started it was a cousin of the Scottish historian Robertson and a cousin also of the mother of Lord Brougham.

A later episode in the Virginia House of Burgesses blew this fire into a furnace flame. Patrick Henry introduced resolutions prompted by the Stamp Act, declaring that the inhabitants of Virginia inherited from the first adventurers and settlers of that dominion equal franchises with the people of Great Britain; that taxation by themselves or by persons chosen to represent them was the distinguishing characteristic of British freedom; that the General Assembly of the whole colony have now the sole right to lay taxes on its

¹ John Fiske: *American Revolution*, vol. i, p. 18 (New York, 1896).

THE ULSTER SCOT

people, and that any attempt to vest such power in any other persons whatever tended to destroy British as well as American freedom. These resolutions were violently resisted by the Royalists; but Patrick Henry rose above himself in urging their adoption, and finally burst out with the exclamation, now one of the most familiar passages in all our Revolutionary oratory: "Tarquin and Caesar had each his Brutus; Charles I his Cromwell; and George III—" "Treason," shouted the Speaker. "Treason" echoed back from every part of the House. But Patrick Henry had heard that cry before; and, with blazing eyes fixed on the Speaker, fearlessly resumed his sentence: "and George III may profit by their example."¹ So this perfervid Scot not only carried the House, but sent the flame for independence through every colony on the continent—never from that hour to die out.

I have thus enumerated some abatements from the prevalent unmingled and indiscriminating eulogy of our Puritans and Cavaliers, for things they did not do, as well as for the ever memorable things they did, which are absolutely necessary to historic accuracy. In spite of them, those pioneers, of illustrious and undying renown, brave beyond comparison, and rigidly conscientious according to their lights, have always received and will always receive ample justice for the inestimable work they

¹ George Bancroft: *History of the United States*, vol. v, p. 277 (Boston, 1869).

THE SCOT IN AMERICA AND

really did. They were the first in the field. They bore with heroism the privations and braved the perils of those who first burst into a savage world; and both privations and perils were beyond any modern conception. The original Pilgrims were of such stuff that, when their first dreary winter compelled them to bury half their entire number, and the slow-coming, cheerless summer drove the survivors to incessant toil amid constant danger to lay up some store for another winter, Governor Bradford, of immortal memory, summoned them to come together at the end of the scanty harvest—for what? To give thanks to Almighty God for the signal mercies He had vouchsafed them! As great literary ability was developed among the descendants of these men, it is small wonder that such devotion has since been celebrated at its full worth; and perhaps sometimes to the disadvantage of later comers, who were apt to be more concerned with doing things than with recording things done.

Puritans and Cavaliers had possession of the field for the first half of the seventeenth century. The Scottish immigration began in the second half. It never had the advantage of concentration in one colony, like the Puritans in Massachusetts or the Cavaliers in Virginia, or even like the settlements of the Quakers and Germans in Pennsylvania. It began, too, under circumstances that made the misfortunes of the Puritans and the Cavaliers seem almost enviable. The first notable Scottish arrivals

THE ULSTER SCOT

were those shipped on the boat "John and Sara" in 1652.¹ They were prisoners of war, captured by Cromwell after the battle of Dunbar, and sentenced to be transported to the American plantations and sold into service. Similar shipments of prisoners of war, and then cargoes of convicted criminals, followed. After a time there sprang up also a system by which poor men secured transportation to the new and cheap lands of the colonies by selling in advance their services for a term of years. And yet, so rapidly did eager followers tread in the steps of the involuntary immigrants that only a third of a century after the first shipload of Scottish prisoners to be sold into service was landed at Boston, a Scottish missionary, the Rev. James Blair, of Edinburgh, was founding one of the oldest of American Colleges, William and Mary, in Virginia. In the century then almost dawning that Scottish educational foundation in the South was to send out many notable students—among them one certainly who has given the whole world cause to remember him and the stock that trained him—Thomas Jefferson.²

¹ Peter Ross, *The Scot in America*, p. 48.

² Thomas Jefferson was of Welsh descent, as were also John Marshall and James Madison. In the beginning of Jefferson's autobiography he pays this tribute to one of his Scottish teachers at William and Mary: "In the spring of 1760 I went to William and Mary College, where I continued two years. It was my great good fortune, and what probably fixed the destinies of my life, that Dr. William Small, of Scotland, was then professor of mathematics, a man profound in most of the useful branches of science, with a happy talent of communication, correct and gentlemanly manners, and an enlarged and liberal mind. He most happily for me became soon attached to me, and made me his daily companion when not engaged in the school ;

THE SCOT IN AMERICA AND

Such, briefly stated, was the modest début of the new and greater force in American development, —Scottish prisoners of war, transported and sold into service; convicted Scottish criminals, transported and sold to get them out of the way; poor but aspiring Scottish lads, selling themselves into service to get a chance in the New World; pious young men from Scottish universities, trying to found like educational centres in the wilderness, for the glory of God. They were nearly half a century behind the Cavaliers in making their start, nearly a third of a century behind the Pilgrims. But the tortoise did not lose the race.

Till the accession of George III the Scottish immigration slowly increased. According to the statistics of the Board of Trade, the white population of the several colonies, in August, 1755, was 1,058,000, thus divided:

Puritan colonies (New England), 405,000.

Cavalier colonies (Southern), 303,000.

Dutch, Quaker, and Huguenot colonies (Middle),
350,000.

That was America when George III came to the throne. Even yet the Scot had not clearly fixed his own stamp on any one of the colonies, or on any large section of one, but in many places there was now an important Scottish infusion that began to leaven the lump.

Thus, shortly after the arrival of the “John and
and from his conversation I got my first views of the expansion of science,
and of the system of things in which we are placed.”

THE ULSTER SCOT

Sara'' prisoners, other Scottish fighting Presbyterians were brought out in the same way and became founders of colonies in Maryland, and on the Elizabeth River in Virginia. Many inhabitants of north-western Scotland, especially the clans of Macdonald and Macleod, were induced to emigrate; and their reports drew after them whole neighborhoods from the Isles of Raasay and Skye. Bladensburg in Maryland, the Cape Fear region, and Wilmington in North Carolina, the York and Rappahannock Rivers in Virginia, and the vicinity of Albemarle Sound were all places at which such colonies were established. In 1736 an emigrant company of Highlanders started New Inverness in Darien, Georgia; and Oglethorpe, eager for such protection for his young colony on the side nearest the Spaniards in Florida, paid them a formal visit, wearing Highland costume, and with the pipes playing before him. Presently a rude fortification was pushed out toward the Spanish frontier, which was given the significant name of Fort St. Andrew. In 1738 an Argyllshire man, Captain Laughlin Campbell, took eighty-three families from his own neighborhood to be established on a grant of forty-seven thousand acres, which he had obtained on the borders of Lake George, New York. Scottish Presbyterians were largely settlers in Putnam County, and others in Dutchess County, New York. Various Highland regiments completed their terms of service during the war with France for the possession of North America, and others were

THE SCOT IN AMERICA AND

disbanded in America at its close. Considerable numbers from all of them obtained grants of land for settlement, and stayed in the Carolinas and Virginia.

The Rev. John Livingston, of Ancrum, a follower of John Knox in the Scottish Kirk, started to America in 1636, with other Scots and some English Puritans. But the "Eagle Wing" on which they were embarked came from no American eagle; it was driven back from mid-Atlantic by a violent storm. Livingston made no further effort to emigrate to America, but resumed his life in Scotland and had a conspicuous career, ending twenty-seven years later in banishment for non-conformity. Soon after his death his younger son, Robert Livingston, took up his father's interrupted plan, reached America, and was presently established in a small office at Albany under the colonial government. Here his influence over the Indians and his aptitude for affairs so commended him to the royal governor that thirteen years later he was given a concession for a large tract of land on the Hudson. George I confirmed it and made him lord of the manor. Thus this orphan waif from the Ancrum manse prospered in the new land, and became the founder of an important Revolutionary family. Both son and grandson of the Ancrum dominie held posts of prominent public service throughout their lives; while the next generation numbered among its members a president of the New York Provin-

THE ULSTER SCOT

cial Congress of 1775, a signer of the Declaration of Independence, and that Governor of New Jersey who liberated his own slaves, officially recommended the abolition of slavery in his own state, and secured the passage of an act forbidding the importation of slaves. There came in one branch of the family three brothers and three sisters, who all led lives of value and public significance. The eldest son was Chancellor Livingston, member of the committee which framed the Declaration of Independence. He administered the oath of office to George Washington as first President of the United States. Jefferson sent him as Minister to France, where he negotiated the purchase of Louisiana. On his return he associated himself with Robert Fulton in the application of steam to navigation. One of his brothers, Henry B. Livingston, was a gallant Revolutionary officer. Another brother, Edward Livingston, codified the laws of Louisiana, and later became Secretary of State under Andrew Jackson. The three sisters became the wives respectively of John Armstrong, Secretary of War under James Madison, of Governor Morgan Lewis, of New York, and of General Richard Montgomery.

This last was an Irish officer of the British army, a native of Donegal, and a student of St. Andrews. He served under Wolfe and Amherst in America, gained the friendship of Edmund Burke, Isaac Barré, and Charles James Fox in London, finally sold out from the army, and returned to America in 1773 to marry and settle down. He had spent

THE SCOT IN AMERICA AND

but two short years of married life when he was seized by reason of his military record for a brigadier-generalship in the Continental army. His duty sent him back over the field of his early experiences in Canada, and finally brought him with Benedict Arnold under the walls of Quebec. There, while gallantly leading his men in the attack, he fell. The British commander, Sir Guy Carleton (first Baron Dorchester), who had previously served with Montgomery, now took pains to give him honorable burial. Provoked at a eulogy on him in the House of Commons by Edmund Burke, Lord North said: "I cannot join in lamenting the death of Montgomery as a public loss. Curse on his virtues! They 've undone his country. He *was* brave, he *was* able, humane, and generous; but still he was only a brave, able, humane, and generous rebel." The reply of a statesman came from another friend of ours, Charles James Fox: "The term of rebel is no certain mark of disgrace. The great asserters of liberty, the saviours of their country, the benefactors of mankind in all ages, have been called rebels."

Forty-two years later New York reclaimed this honored soldier for state burial, with every tribute of national pride, in St. Paul's Churchyard, where he still lies, in Broadway's central roar, under the marble monument selected for him in Paris by Benjamin Franklin. As the boat sent by the state to bring back the hero, surrounded by all the trappings of military glory and mourning, approached

THE ULSTER SCOT

Montgomery Place (the home on the Hudson he had been building for his bride when he was summoned to the war), she who had waited all these years for his return appeared on the veranda to see him pass. What wonder that, when the solemn convoy rounded the point, when the wail of the funeral music was heard, and the flag of her country dipped low to convey to the faithful, gray-haired widow the affectionate gratitude of the state and nation, she was overpowered by the contending emotions of pride and grief and loneliness with her dead, and fell fainting to the floor!

Another portentous Scot, born in Kirkcudbrightshire in 1747, went to Virginia when thirteen years old, left it thenceforward only in the course of his seafaring life, and was able long afterward to say: "I had the honor to hoist with my own hands the flag of freedom the first time it was displayed on the Delaware, and I have attended it with veneration, ever since, on the ocean." Some of this ocean service was such that his old country put a price of ten thousand guineas on his head. His new country thought it worth the first captain's commission in her navy, gave him command of all American ships in European waters, tendered him the thanks of Congress, and after the close of the war voted him a gold medal. Scottish people, considering this brave and brilliant contribution from their country to the American navy, recalling some mitigated local grievances, but remembering also the careful atonement, the magnificent

THE SCOT IN AMERICA AND

seamanship and courage, and the undeniable, the world-wide fame, may very possibly find refuge where Scottish people so often do, in their proverbial philosophy, and decide that if Admiral Paul Jones was ower bad for blessing, he was certainly ower good for banning.

If they wish, however, to exercise the undeniable gifts of the race for banning, there is another famous Scottish American sailor whom we might turn over to them with less reserve. This man, the son of a clergyman, was born at Greenock about 1650. He first appears in America in 1691, when the New York Colonial Assembly voted him its thanks for services to the commerce of the colony, and later gave him the more substantial reward of £150. Governor Bellamont took him up, and sent him out on a roving commission to sweep the coast of pirates—a task he discharged so well that he was now given £250. Then he set up as a home-made pirate himself, filled the marine world with stories of Captain Kidd's exploits and half our coast with stories of Captain Kidd's buried treasures. At last Lord Bellamont succeeded in arresting him. England tried him, and he was hanged in chains in Execution Dock. And yet Burns, who even had pity for the Devil, might well have held a brief for a worse man than this fellow Scot. Those were wild days on the sea; even Great Britain had her press-gangs, and sent out slavers, and it may be that local magnates in the colonies, after the fashion of the times, thought it no harm to encourage

THE ULSTER SCOT

(for mutual benefit) a "gentleman adventurer," as the tolerant phrase was, in relieving Spaniards, and "others beyond the pale," of their doubloons and silks!

There can be no difference of opinion as to the services of another great Scotsman, born at Yester, not far from Edinburgh, in the domain of the Marquess of Tweeddale. He was a descendant on his mother's side from John Knox,¹ and had already a notable career, when in 1768 he yielded to a second call from Princeton University, and became its president. He brought it to a place among the foremost educational institutions of the land, and impressed upon it, as some one has said, the Scottish and Presbyterian thoroughness it maintained all through, from Witherspoon to McCosh. He took besides a high-minded citizen's part in all the fervid activities of the times; was directly responsible for the settlement in Ryegate, Vermont, in 1774, of the Scottish colony under General James Whitelaw, which founded Caledonia County; encouraged other Scottish immigration; came to wield great influence in the Continen-

¹ A distinguished New England author, in a private letter, questions this descent. His wife being a descendant of Witherspoon, he had felt an interest in establishing the relationship to John Knox. After careful investigation he finally concluded that there was no evidence of the fact, but that the story was purely traditional and conjectural. The statement in the text, however, seems to have been long and generally accepted. Thus the recent edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* gives it as an unquestioned fact. The great *Dictionary of National Biography* says substantially the same thing, and in varying phrases the same statement is made in Appleton's *Cyclopædia of American Biography*, Lamb's *Biographical Dictionary of the United States*, and Johnson's *Universal Cyclopædia*.

THE SCOT IN AMERICA AND

tal Congress, and finally wrote the name of John Witherspoon on that bead-roll of foremost Americans, the signers of the Declaration of Independence. It is perhaps what might have been expected from the John Knox blood.

Many a son of Scottish Presbyterians in America has been drawn to the grave of Ralph Erskine, a great man of their faith, in the picturesque burial-ground beside a noted old church in Dunfermline; but his reverence for the famous divine has been tinged with a warmer feeling, from his remembrance that this Presbyterian seceder's son was sent to America in charge of what are now known as the Cooper and Hewitt ironworks at Ringwood, New Jersey, from which place he rose to be the trusted chief of engineers on the staff of George Washington.

It was in isolated cases like these, and in scattered communities, that the Scottish immigrants during the earlier part of George III's reign, from 1742 to 1776, had made themselves felt as leaders, even among the Puritans and Cavaliers. They attained, too, an altogether disproportionate influence through their education, their energy, and their sturdy principle,—and also, let it not be forgotten, through a native thrift that often made them the wealthiest citizens in their respective communities.

But it is now time to take into account another stream of Scottish immigration—the Ulster Scot. This term is preferred to the familiar “Scotch-

THE ULSTER SCOT

Irish," constantly used in America, because it does not confuse the race with the accident of birth, and because the early immigrants preferred it themselves.¹ An Irishman's ready wit in his own case bars out the other name. Since he was born in Liverpool, the census enumerator was setting him down as English, when he indignantly interrupted: "Sure, and is it any rayson for calling a man a horse because he was born in a stable?" And, in fact, if these Scottish and Presbyterian colonists must be called Irish because they had been one or two generations in the North of Ireland, then the Pilgrim Fathers, who had been one generation or more in Holland, must by the same reasoning be called Dutch, or at the very least English-Dutch.

¹ Parker's *History of Londonderry, New Hampshire*: "Although they came to this land from Ireland, where their ancestors had, a century before, planted themselves, yet they retained unmixed the national Scotch character. Nothing sooner offended them than to be called Irish. Their antipathy to this appellation had its origin in the hostility then existing in Ireland between the Celtic race, the native Irish, and the English and Scotch colonists."

In the same work may be found a letter from the Rev. James MacGregor to Governor Shute, saying: "We are surprised to hear ourselves termed Irish people, when we so frequently ventured our all for the British Crown and liberties . . . and gave all tests of our loyalty which the Government of Ireland required, and are always ready to do the same when required."

In the legislature of the Province of Pennsylvania (1763-64) Nathaniel Grubb, from Chester County, denounced the action of the Paxtang (now Harrisburg) settlers, who had been stung by treacherous Indian attacks into a wholesale slaughter of the Indians, and referred to the settlers as "a pack of insignificant Scotch-Irish, who, if they were all killed, could well enough be spared."

An amusing controversy on the propriety of the term followed the publication of an admirable paper on "The Scotch-Irish in America," by Samuel Swett Green, read before the American Antiquarian Society, 1895. The correspondence was printed in an appendix.

THE SCOT IN AMERICA AND

In this new source of Scottish settlers for the colonies the blood is the same and the religious faith is the same, but they had been sent from Scotland to the North of Ireland one, two, or three generations before; some by James I, others by Cromwell; while others went later, attracted by cheap farms and fancied opportunities for trade. After a time they began to suffer from unfriendly legislation, from Church persecution, and from the hostility of the expelled British monarch, James II, which among other things forced them to their long and heroic defence of Londonderry. These experiences turned their eyes after the Scotsmen already prospering in the American colonies, and presently a great movement began among the Ulster Scots. In 1718 five small ships arrived at Boston with about seven hundred and fifty of them, who ultimately settled, some at Londonderry, New Hampshire, some in Boston, some at Worcester, Massachusetts, and others near Portland, Maine. A year later some hundreds more of Ulster-Scottish families were brought to the Kennebec River in Maine by Captain Robert Temple, an ancestor of the well-known Robert C. Winthrop of Massachusetts. These and succeeding parties from Ulster soon made a considerable element in the northern New England population.

William Penn was a man of business, and as such he found it to his interest as early as 1682 to secure as many Scots as possible for the second colony in which he was concerned, that of New

THE ULSTER SCOT

Jersey. Its eastern portion was largely occupied by them. Meantime the religious freedom which Penn did establish, while the Puritans did not, combined with the milder climate and the cheaper land, began to divert the further flow of Ulster-Scottish immigration from its earlier field in New England to western Pennsylvania. By 1725 they had made such an impression there that the governor, James Logan, declared, "It looks as if Ireland were to send all her inhabitants. If they continue to come, they will make themselves proprietors of the Province." Only a little over a century and a half later, Pittsburg alone was proprietor of greater values than that, and its Congressman, John Dalzell, was able to say of his town in the American phraseology, that "it is Scotch-Irish in substantial origin, in complexion and history—Scotch-Irish in the countenances of the living, and the records of the dead."¹

At the outbreak of the Revolutionary War, in

¹ John Dalzell: "The Scotch-Irish in Western Pennsylvania," *Proceedings of Second Scotch-Irish Congress*, p. 175.

An advertisement in the Belfast *News-Letter* of March 6, 1738, shows that at that early date the Ulster Scot imitated his kinsmen across the Channel, in selling himself into service in order to reach the new country. It reads:

"This is to give notice, That the Snow Charming Molly, Mr. Henry McLachlan, Master, will be well fitted out, Mann'd and Victual'd, and clear to sail from Belfast for New-Castle or Pennsylvania in America, against the first day of May next, the said Mr. McLachlan will treat with any who have Goods to transport thither, or go as Passengers, Redemptioners, or Servants, on the most easy and reasonable terms."

A longer advertisement in the Belfast *News-Letter* of October 31, 1769, shows that even then, only a few years before the Declaration of Independence, the same practice among immigrants prevailed of selling their services in advance and going out to the new country as "redemptioners."

THE SCOT IN AMERICA AND

spite of the long start of the Quakers and the Germans, it was believed that one-third of the entire population of Pennsylvania was of Ulster-Scottish origin. As early as the middle of that century the number of Presbyterians (Scots and Ulster Scots) scattered through all the colonies was reckoned by Dr. Charles Hodge, author of the "Constitutional History of the Presbyterian Church," at largely above a hundred thousand, perhaps nearly two hundred thousand, as against the total number of Puritans that ever came, which he puts at about twenty-one thousand. By the time of the Zenger trial in New York, the Presbyterians were far the most numerous there, outnumbering the Dutch Reformed or the Church of England membership.

In 1736 an Ulster Scot, Henry McCulloch, settled between three and four thousand of his countrymen on a land grant of sixty-four thousand acres in what is now the county of Duplin, North Carolina. A few years later a steady stream of Ulster Scots was pouring into Philadelphia, some going west toward Pittsburg, and still farther, to Kentucky and Tennessee; others turning south sooner and filling the valleys of West Virginia, the western parts of North and South Carolina, and even Georgia, with rough clearings, log-cabin schoolhouses, and Presbyterian churches. As early as 1729 five thousand of them entered Pennsylvania alone in a year. After the famine it was estimated that twelve thousand of them reached the colonies every year. A renewed movement began

THE ULSTER SCOT

in 1771, and by the end of 1773 it was reckoned that thirty thousand more of them had come. One authority, a New England historian,¹ counts that between 1730 and 1770 at least half a million souls were transferred from Ulster to the colonies, more than half the Presbyterian population of Ulster, and that at the time of the Revolution they made one-sixth of the total population of the colonies. Another and very careful authority² fixes the inhabitants of Scottish ancestry in the nine colonies south of New England as about three hundred and eighty-five thousand. He considers that less than half of the entire population of the colonies was of English origin, and that nearly or quite one-third of it had a Scottish ancestry.

That was the numerical responsibility, then, of that ancestry for the War of Independence. Its intellectual and moral responsibility was far more. It was no author with Scottish blood in his veins, it was the typical New Englander, George Bancroft, who closed his account of the incoming of the Ulster Scots with these words:

“They brought to America no submissive love for England; and their experience and their religion alike bade them meet oppression with prompt resistance. We shall find the first voice publicly raised in America to dissolve all connection with Great Britain come not from the

¹ John Fiske : *Old Virginia and her Neighbours* (New York, 1897), vol. ii, p. 394.

² Charles A. Hanna : *The Scotch-Irish* (New York, 1902), vol. i, p. 83.

THE SCOT IN AMERICA AND

Puritans of New England, or the Dutch of New York, or the planters of Virginia, but from Scotch-Irish Presbyterians.”¹

But these are mainly statements gleaned from the sparse records on the subject by American historians. I may add the views of two of England’s greatest historians in the last century, Froude and Lecky. Mr. Froude says:

“And now recommenced the Protestant emigration. . . . Twenty thousand left Ulster on the destruction of the woollen trade. Many more were driven away by the first passage of the Test Act. The stream had slackened, in the hope that the law would be altered. When the prospect was finally closed, men of spirit and energy refused to remain; . . . and thenceforward, until . . . 1782, annual shiploads of families poured themselves out from Belfast and Londonderry. The resentment which they carried with them continued to burn in their new homes; and, in the War of Independence, England had no fiercer enemies than the grandsons and great-grandsons of the Presbyterians who had held Ulster against Tyrconnell.”²

And again Mr. Froude says, with reference to the action of Lord Donegal in 1772 concerning his Antrim leases:

“The most substantial of the expelled tenantry gathered their effects together and sailed to join their countrymen in the New World, where the Scotch-Irish became known as the most bitter of the secessionists. . . . The emigration was not the whole of the mischief. Those who

¹ George Bancroft: *History of the United States* (Boston), vol. v, p. 77.

² Froude: *The English in Ireland* (London, 1872), vol. i, p. 392.

THE ULSTER SCOT

went carried their art and their tools along with them, and at the rate at which the stream was flowing the colonies would soon have no need of British and Irish imports. In the two years which followed the Antrim evictions, thirty thousand Protestants left Ulster for a land . . . where those who sowed the seed could reap the harvest. They went with bitterness in their hearts, cursing and detesting the aristocratic system of which the ennobling qualities were lost, and only the worst retained.¹ . . . There is a Bunker's Hill close outside Belfast. Massachusetts tradition has forgotten how the name came to the Charlestown Peninsula."²

And here is Mr. Lecky's estimate as to the numbers and character of the Ulster emigration:

"For nearly three-quarters of a century the drain of the energetic Protestant population continued. . . . The famine of 1740 and 1741 gave an immense impulse to the movement, and it is said that for several years the Protestant emigrants from Ulster annually amounted to about 12,000. More than thirty years later Arthur Young found the stream still flowing, and he mentioned that, in 1773, 4000 emigrants had sailed from Belfast alone. Newenham, who, in his book on 'Irish Population,' has collected much information on this subject, remarks: 'If we said that during fifty years of the last century the average annual emigrations to America and the West Indies amounted to about 4000, and consequently that in that space of time about 200,000 had emigrated to the British plantations, I am disposed to think we should

¹ Froude: *The English in Ireland* (London, 1872), vol. ii, p. 125.

² *Ibid.*, vol. ii, p. 124: "Bunker's Hill is supposed to be a corruption of Brunker's Hill. Captain Brunker was an officer who came to Ulster with Lord Essex in 1572, and received a grant of land in Antrim."

THE SCOT IN AMERICA AND

fall rather short of than exceed the truth.' . . . Many went to the West Indies, and many others to the American colonies. They went with hearts burning with indignation, and in the War of Independence they were almost to a man on the side of the insurgents. They supplied some of the best soldiers of Washington. The famous Pennsylvania Line was mainly Irish. . . . Emigrants from Ulster formed a great part of the American army.'¹

In March, 1775, Patrick Henry, the Scot, uttered in St. John's Church, Richmond, the fateful and famous words: "It is too late to retire from the contest. There is no retreat but in submission and slavery. The war is inevitable, and let it come! The next gale that sweeps from the north will bring to our ears the clash of resounding arms! I know not what course others may take, but, as for me, give me liberty or give me death." Two months later the Ulster Scots adopted the notable Mecklenburg resolution, declaring that the joint address of the two Houses of Parliament to the king had virtually "annulled and vacated all civil and military commissions granted by the crown, and suspended the constitutions of the colonies;" that "the provincial congress of each province is now invested with all the legislative and executive powers within their respective provinces, and no other legislative or executive power does or can exist at this time in any of the colonies." When asked how they reconciled in their consciences this action

¹ Lecky : *History of England in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1878), vol. ii, p. 261.

THE ULSTER SCOT

with their oaths of allegiance, they boldly answered: "The oath binds only while the king protects."¹

A few months later came the Declaration of Independence, summing up the conclusions to which for years the Scots and Ulster Scots had been leading. Out of the fifty-six members who composed the Congress that adopted it, eleven were of Scottish descent; and among them were such conspicuous leaders as John Witherspoon, of New Jersey, James Wilson, of Pennsylvania, Philip Livingston, of New York, and Edward Rutledge, of South Carolina. At the momentary and natural hesitation to "put their necks in a halter" by signing this document after its adoption, it was one of these Scots, John Witherspoon again, who came to the front and carried the day. "He that will not respond to its accents and strain every nerve to carry into effect its provisions," he said, "is unworthy the name of freeman. For myself, although these gray hairs must soon descend into the sepulchre, I would infinitely rather they should descend thither by the hand of the public executioner than desert at this crisis the sacred cause of my country." On that appeal of a Scotsman born, the Declaration was signed. We guard it now, sacredly preserved in the handwriting of the Ulster Scot who was the secretary of the Congress; it was first publicly read to the people by an Ulster Scot, and first printed by a third Ulster Scot. Well might Froude write

¹ John Fiske: *American Revolution* (New York, 1896), vol. i, p. 133.

THE SCOT IN AMERICA AND

in another century: "The foremost, the most irreconcilable, the most determined in pushing the quarrel to the last extremity were those whom the bishops and Lord Donegal and Company had been pleased to drive out of Ulster."

At the first news of the skirmish at Lexington, John Stark, an Ulster Scot, of Londonderry, started for Cambridge, hurriedly gathered together eight hundred backwoodsmen, and marched with them toward the sound of the enemy's guns at Bunker Hill. It was there, facing the well-fed British troops, that he gave the still remembered order, "Boys, aim—at their waistbands." After Nathanael Greene, the other most noted general officers from New England were John Stark and Henry Knox, Ulster Scots, and John Sullivan, an Irishman. Three others of Scottish origin were among Washington's major-generals at the close of the war, William Alexander, of New Jersey, Alexander McDougall, of New York, and the gallant and pathetic figure of Arthur St. Clair. Out of his twenty-two brigadier-generals nine were of Scottish descent, and among the generals no longer in the ranks at the close of the war a similar proportion had been maintained. Two of the most noted battles in South Carolina, where half the population was Ulster Scottish, were those of King's Mountain and Cowpens. At the first, five of the colonels were Presbyterian ruling elders, and their troops were mainly recruited from Presbyterian settlements. At the Cowpens, General Morgan,

THE ULSTER SCOT

who commanded, and General Pickens were both Presbyterian elders, and most of their troops were Presbyterians. Several other Presbyterian elders held high commands in the same state throughout the war.

One of the greatest achievements of the war occurred so far in the west that not till long afterward was its importance realized. This was the rescue of Kentucky and of that whole rich territory northwest of the Ohio, subsequently forever dedicated to freedom by the famous Ordinance of 1787, from which five states were formed. For that momentous work, carried on in obscurity while attention was concentrated on the seaboard colonies, without encouragement and with the scantiest means, but with skill and with heroism, we are indebted to General George Rogers Clark, a Scottish native of Albemarle County, Virginia. It was quite natural that we should have been indebted to his younger brother, as one of the leaders in the Lewis and Clark expedition, for the discoveries in the northwest and on the Columbia River that may be said to have ultimately given us the Pacific coast.

When the states gained their independence and it came to framing a constitution for the new nation, out of fifty-four members of the Convention twelve were of Scottish descent. But here, as on many other occasions, the Scotsmen weighed far more than their numbers would indicate. Of the

THE SCOT IN AMERICA AND

college-bred men in the Convention over one-half were of Scottish descent.

One of them stood easily at the head, and for pure intellectual eminence and the genius of statesmanship outranked, then and till his premature death, any other living American. This was that marvellous West Indian boy, half Scottish, half Huguenot French, Alexander Hamilton,¹ who came to America for an education at the age of fifteen, who persuaded King's College to let him take its curriculum in less than the prescribed four years, who left it to plunge into the popular discussions at the outbreak of the war, effectively addressing tumultuous public meetings and writing powerful appeals; who was a captain of New York artillery at nineteen, private secretary to George Washington at twenty, and at twenty-four the dashing soldier who led the assault on Cornwallis's first redoubt before Yorktown. At twenty-five, as a member of Congress, he did his best to restrain the unwise persecution of the defeated loyalists, and the discreditable repudiation of debts

¹One of the best recent biographies of this great man is by a British writer, Frederick Scott Oliver. Another popular biography is by Senator Henry Cabot Lodge in the "American Statesmen Series," and a recent work, *The Intimate Life of Alexander Hamilton*, embodying some new material, is by Hamilton's grandson, Dr. Allan McLane Hamilton, of New York. Two other works which have enjoyed great popularity are by Mrs. Gertrude Atherton, *The Conqueror* and *A Few of Hamilton's Letters*. Other material, possibly somewhat less impartial, is offered in the *Life* by his son, John C. Hamilton, and in the same writer's *History of the Republic of the United States of America as traced in the Writings of Alexander Hamilton and of his Contemporaries*; and also in *Reminiscences of Hamilton*, by another son, James Alexander Hamilton.

THE ULSTER SCOT

into which the victorious side were plunging. At twenty-nine he was the controlling spirit in the Annapolis Convention which prepared the way for and called the Convention that next year secured the "more perfect Union," and framed the Constitution of the United States. His thirtieth year found him not the most conspicuous or talkative member of that body, but easily the one wielding the most influence in favor of a strong government, and realizing his more important ideals in the historic document it framed—the first successful written Constitution for a great free government, the one that has lasted the longest and achieved incomparably the highest results.

To draft such a Constitution had been a task of the highest statesmanship. To secure its adoption from jealous and jangling states which did not like it, and did not care for the more complete Union for which it provided, was a greater task and at the outset even more hopeless; and in this Hamilton, now a young man of thirty, did the most valuable work of his life. Always a leader of men, he had carried the timid but singularly persuasive Madison a long way in favor of a strong government in the Convention. He now enlisted him as a most efficient aid in commending their plan to the people. The result was a great book, published first in short essays in the daily newspapers; then collected into "The Federalist;" and studied now, after the lapse of more than a century, as still one of the most vital and cogent presentations of

THE SCOT IN AMERICA AND

the principles of successful popular government known to the literature of the world. The plan was Hamilton's, and most of the work was his. Out of eighty-five papers he wrote over fifty; Madison perhaps twenty-five; John Jay a few.

So far as the Press could secure the adoption of the new form of government, "The Federalist" did it. But there remained the need of personal influence in the doubtful states, and most of all, of a gallant and powerful popular leader to confront the strenuous opposition of Clinton, the New York forerunner of the modern "political boss." At the outset, two-thirds of the New York Convention and four-sevenths of the people were hostile to the Constitution. After a six weeks' struggle, in which Hamilton was the constant leader and made a vehement closing speech, the head of Clinton's forces rose and admitted that "Mr. Hamilton had removed his objections." Even yet Clinton himself continued the struggle. At last Hamilton's messengers brought news that Virginia had been carried; and then New York, which began with a hostile majority of thirty-five, ratified the Constitution by a majority of three. When Hamilton returned from the Convention to his home, the whole city hailed him as the victor, and met him with music and flags and processions.

He was now thirty-one years of age. Only sixteen years more were left him; but in that time he did two other things, on either of which alone a great reputation might have securely rested. He

THE ULSTER SCOT

served in Washington's Cabinet as Secretary of the Treasury. It was a period when the treasury was empty, when repudiation of public and private debts due in Great Britain discredited the new government in foreign eyes, while persecution of the Tories lowered it both at home and abroad. Yet, unhappily, this disastrous policy was not only popular, but support of it was held a proof of patriotism. Hamilton set his face against it like flint, and soon gave check to repudiation and brought order into the disordered finances. Furthermore, he gave the new, unorganized Treasury Department the organization which has served it ever since—making in it, as before in the Constitution, a provision for the wants of a people of three millions, so well devised that when they have grown to ninety millions it is still found adequate. Then this young man, only thirty-eight even yet, whose life had been spent in camps, in constitution-making, and in the Cabinet, turned to the most exacting of the professions, and in the remaining nine years conquered a place as a great lawyer, inferior to no other in that nation of lawyers. At forty-seven he fell in an unprovoked duel, without even aiming at his antagonist.

If any man of his race, at home or abroad, has a more varied record of loftier achievements, then there is more reason than any of us have hitherto realized for still greater pride in the land and in the blood! I venture to rank this grandson of Alexander Hamilton, of Grange, in Ayrshire, and of

THE SCOT IN AMERICA AND

the eldest daughter of Sir Robert Pollock of that ilk, as the foremost Scottish contribution to America, in that most critical and formative period—indeed, as the foremost contribution from any part of the world.

James Wilson, a Scotsman, born at St. Andrews, deserves always to be remembered in connection with the constitutional part of the career just described. He approached Hamilton himself as closely as a great lawyer, the first legal scholar of his time and place, and perhaps then the head of the American bar, could approach one who, besides being a statesman of commanding and many-sided ability, was a man of genius. Wilson was also a signer of the Declaration, and a most useful and influential member of the Convention that framed the Constitution. In most cases, he gave his whole influence with Hamilton and Madison against the self-destructive plans of state sovereignty, and for a strong government. When it was set up Washington put him on the bench of the Supreme Court of the United States, where he remained in increasing usefulness till his death in 1798.

On that great court, as Washington first organized it, three of the four Associate Justices were of the same blood, two Scots and one an Ulster Scot.¹ When the first Chief Justice, John Jay, left the bench, his successor, John Rutledge, was an

¹ James Wilson, of Pennsylvania, and John Blair, of Virginia, Scots; John Rutledge, of South Carolina, Ulster Scot.

THE ULSTER SCOT

Ulster Scot. Washington's first Cabinet contained four members. Two of them were Scots and a third was an Ulster Scot.¹ Among the first governors for the new state governments set up by the colonies, nine (two-thirds) were of either Scottish or Ulster-Scottish origin: George Clinton, of New York, Thomas McKean, of Pennsylvania, William Livingston, of New Jersey, Patrick Henry, of Virginia, John MacKinley, of Delaware, Richard Caswell, of North Carolina, John Rutledge, of South Carolina, Archibald Bulloch, of Georgia, and Jonathan Trumbull, of Connecticut.

The same tendency is marked throughout the list of men who have filled the great office of President of the United States. Eleven out of the whole twenty-five, nearly one-half, were of Scottish or Ulster-Scottish origin. The ancestry of James Monroe is not wholly clear, but most of the authorities agree that his father was of what they call Scottish Cavalier descent, from a family that emigrated to Virginia in 1650. Andrew Jackson was born in South Carolina, two years after his parents, Ulster Scots, had emigrated from Carrickfergus, County Down. James K. Polk was the descendant of Ulster Scots from County Londonderry, who came to Maryland about 1690. James Buchanan was the grandson of an Ulster-Scottish pair who

¹ Alexander Hamilton, of New York, a Scot; Henry Knox, of Massachusetts, an Ulster Scot; and Edmund Randolph, of Virginia, who claimed among his ancestors the Scottish Earls of Murray.

THE SCOT IN AMERICA AND

came to Pennsylvania in 1783 from County Donegal. Andrew Johnson was the grandson of an Ulster Scot who settled first in Pennsylvania and then removed to North Carolina about 1750. General Ulysses S. Grant was, on the mother's side, a descendant of Ulster Scots who settled in Pennsylvania about 1763. Rutherford B. Hayes was the descendant of George Hayes, who emigrated from Scotland to America about 1680. Chester Alan Arthur was the grandson of Gavin MacArthur, of Ballymena, County Antrim. Stephen Grover Cleveland was, on the mother's side, an Ulster Scot. Benjamin Harrison, among the greatest of recent Presidents, came of one of the families most conspicuous in America for high public service through successive generations. He was, on the father's side, of Cavalier origin, the grandson of a President, and great-grandson of a signer of the Declaration of Independence; on the mother's side a descendant of an Ulster Scot named McDowell. William McKinley was of Ulster-Scottish descent. Theodore Roosevelt, on the father's side, is of Dutch origin; on the mother's side, is a descendant of Alexander Bulloch, the Scottish first governor of the State of Georgia.

Of the twenty-five men whose names fill up this shining roll of the American Presidency, nearly one-half chose Secretaries of the Treasury of Scottish descent, and nearly one-third chose Secretaries of State of the same blood. In the Treasury, besides the great figure of Alexander Hamilton,

THE ULSTER SCOT

we recall such men as Louis McLane, Thomas Ewing, one of the foremost lawyers of the country, Thomas Corwin, the nearest rival to Henry Clay as a popular orator, James Guthrie, and that noble pair chosen by Lincoln, Salmon P. Chase, of Ohio, and Hugh McCulloch, of Indiana. In the State Department no names shine brighter than the Scottish ones, from Edward Livingston and John C. Calhoun to James G. Blaine, John Hay, and Philander C. Knox. Of the new men who came upon the stage in the second quarter of the Republic's existence, three were by common consent pre-eminent, Daniel Webster, John C. Calhoun, and Henry Clay. One was Scottish, Daniel Webster, whose ancestor, Thomas Webster, came to New Hampshire in 1636; one was Ulster Scottish, John C. Calhoun, whose grandfather, James Calhoun, emigrated from Donegal to Pennsylvania in 1733; and the third, Henry Clay, has been claimed as Ulster Scottish by some writers, apparently only on the presumptive evidence of birth in Virginia in a region peopled by many Ulster Scots, and in circumstances like theirs.

In all the historic achievements of Scotland, is there any more remarkable than this conquest of leadership in a new land by men half a century behind other and strong races in entering upon the scene? Still, like the rest of the world, Scotland will have to take the bitter with the sweet. These Scotsmen beyond the Atlantic were not always a credit to their native land. Aside from the leader-

THE SCOT IN AMERICA AND

ship they displayed, Scotland can prize no laurels from the record of Captain Kidd, the pirate; or of her sons from Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, who in 1763 inaugurated lynch law in America;¹ or of Callender, the professional libeller and black-mailer, who began yellow journalism in the United States and took pay for persistently libelling, first George Washington, then Alexander Hamilton, then John Adams, and finally Thomas Jefferson. It was of him that one of the most graphic of our recent historians, McMaster, wrote: "As destitute of principle as of money, his talents, which were not despicable, were ever up for sale. The question with him was never what he wrote, but what he was to be paid for writing."² With all our advances in civilization, perhaps that breed has not yet entirely died out on either side of the Atlantic.

In America Scotsmen have not often figured as leaders of lost causes; but the President of the

¹ The first victims were six Iroquois Indians at Conestoga. A Paxtang citizen (Harrisburg was then called Paxtang) recognized among them the Indian who had killed his own mother. The settlement was instantly attacked, six were killed, and fourteen escaped to Lancaster, where they were sheltered in jail. Among them there was known to be another man who had murdered certain relatives of a Paxtang citizen. A body of fifty marched from Paxtang to Lancaster, broke into the jail, and killed every Indian in it. See letter to the Governor of Pennsylvania from the captain of the Pennsylvania Rangers and the Governor of Pennsylvania's proclamations; also *Statement of Grievances, Colonial Records of Pennsylvania*, vol. ix, pp. 138-145.

² John Bach McMaster: *History of the People of the United States*, vol. ii, p. 468.

THE ULSTER SCOT

Southern Confederacy, Jefferson Davis, and his Secretary of War, John C. Breckenridge, who had just before the secession been Vice-President of the United States, were of that blood. Another leader in a cause that seemed lost, but ended first in an independent nation, and then in peaceful annexation to the United States, was Sam Houston, President of the Republic of Texas, and first representative of the State of Texas in the United States Senate. In the Civil War, among many leaders of Scottish descent on the Union side, the names of Grant, McPherson, McDowell, McClellan, Gillmore, and Frank Blair will occur to all. On the Confederate side were Joseph E. Johnston, one of our ablest soldiers; James Longstreet, J. E. B. Stuart, and one more, to name whom is enough to shed an undying lustre over the ranks of the lost cause. It was another Presbyterian ruling elder:

“ We see him now — the queer slouched hat,
 Cocked o’er his eye askew;
The shrewd, dry smile; the speech so pat,
 So calm, so blunt, so true;
The ‘Blue-light Elder.’ . . .

“ Silence! Ground arms! Kneel all! Caps off!
 Old Massa’s going to pray.
Strangle the fool that dares to scoff:
 Attention! — it’s his way.
Appealing from his native sod,
 In forma pauperis to God,
‘Lay bare Thine arm! Stretch forth Thy rod.’

THE SCOT IN AMERICA AND

“He ’s in the saddle now. Fall in!
Steady! the whole brigade.
Hill ’s at the ford, cut off; we ’ll win
His way out, ball and blade.
What matter if our shoes are worn?
What matter if our feet are torn?
Quick step we ’re with him before morn :
That ’s Stonewall Jackson’s Way.”

The antislavery movement which led to our Civil War began among the Scottish and Ulster-Scottish immigrants; though not in New England. This is a prevalent delusion, which the brilliant writers of that region have not always discouraged. But the real antislavery movement began among the Scottish Covenanters (largely in South Carolina and East Tennessee) twenty to thirty years before there was any organized opposition to slavery elsewhere, even in Massachusetts. At the beginning of the century the Rev. Dr. Alexander McLeod hesitated at accepting a call to the Covenanter congregation in Chambers Street, New York, because a small Newburgh congregation was associated in the call, some of whose members held slaves. Thereupon the Presbytery enacted that “henceforth no slaveholder should be retained in their communion.”¹ That was in November, 1800. By 1815 the Covenanters, the Methodists, and the Quakers of East Tennessee had eighteen emancipation societies. A few years later there were five or six in

¹ Centennial Celebration of First Reformed Presbyterian Church in the City of New York: Sermon by the Pastor, the Rev. James Dallas Steele, Ph.D., 1897.

THE ULSTER SCOT

Kentucky. By 1826 there were one hundred and forty-three emancipation societies in the United States, of which one hundred and three were in the south, and as yet, so far as known, not one in Massachusetts. As late as 1833, the gentlest and sweetest of American antislavery poets, John G. Whittier, the Quaker, was mobbed in Massachusetts for attempting to make an abolition speech. John Rankin, the noted Covenanter antislavery leader, said that it was safer in 1820 to make abolition speeches in Kentucky or Tennessee than at the north; and William Lloyd Garrison wrote in 1833 that he was surrounded in Massachusetts by contempt more bitter, prejudice more stubborn, and apathy more frozen than among slaveholders themselves.¹

During the whole period, from the Revolution to the Civil War, the indomitable Ulster Scots, chiefly from Pennsylvania and the south, were pouring over the Alleghenies, carrying with them the frontiers of the country, fighting the Indians and the wild beasts, subduing and planting the wilderness, westward to the Mississippi. Of this conquering race, a President of the United States, William McKinley, said: ²

“The Scotch-Irishman comes of mighty stock—that we know—descending from those who would fight, who would die, but never surrender. Celt and Saxon are in

¹ Oliver Perry Temple: *The Covenanter, Cavalier, and Puritan*.

² *Proceedings Fifth Scotch-Irish Congress*, Springfield, Ohio, 1893.

THE SCOT IN AMERICA AND

him combined, after each has been tempered and refined. The Celt made his final stand as a racial individuality in the extremities of Western Europe. . . . The blood of the North Britons mingled with that of the Celt from the Green Isle and with that of the ancient Pict. The result of this commingling of blood and of local environment was the Lowland Scot, even then possessing characteristics distinct from the Highlander and the Irish Celt. The Lowlander recrossed the narrow sea to Ulster. His going marked an epoch in the history of civilization. The tragic history of Ireland has been for centuries food for racial hate. In this land, at least, the irremediable past should not be matter for quarrel. . . . To the Ulsterman across the ocean, to the Celt south of him, each with his virtues and his faults, I can but say, in the tender, pleading language of the venerable Gladstone: 'Let me entreat you—and if it were with my latest breath I would entreat you—to let the dead past bury its dead, to cast behind you every recollection of bygone evils, and to cherish, to love, to sustain one another through all the vicissitudes of human affairs in the times that are to come.'

"As American citizens, the Scotch-Irish have ample reason for pride. They were the first to proclaim for freedom in these United States; even before Lexington, Scotch-Irish blood had been shed in behalf of American freedom; and the spirit of Patrick Henry animated the Scotch-Irish to a man when the great clash came. 'In the forefront of every battle was seen their burnished mail, and in the gloomy rear of retreat was heard their voice of constancy and courage.' Of no race or people can Milton's words be applied in juster eulogy: 'Inflamed with the study of learning and the admiration of virtue; stirred up with high hope of living to be brave men and worthy patriots, dear to God, and famous to all ages.' Next

THE ULSTER SCOT

to their intense patriotism, the distinguishing characteristics of the Scotch-Irish are their love of learning and of religion. The Scotch-Irishman is the ideal educator, and he is a natural theologian. It would be difficult to find a college or university without a Scotch-Irishman upon its Faculty. Another marked characteristic is the love of home and family, and, wherever this prevails, there are found manly virtue, and high integrity, and good citizenship. The home and the schoolhouse have been mighty forces, marking the progress of the Scotch-Irish race."

On the same subject another President of the United States, Theodore Roosevelt, says in his "Winning of the West:"

"Full credit has been awarded the Roundhead and the Cavalier; nor have we been altogether blind to the deeds of the Hollander and the Huguenot; but it is doubtful if we have wholly realized the importance of the part played by that stern and virile people whose preachers taught the creed of Knox and Calvin. These representatives of the Covenanters were in the West almost what the Puritans were in the North-east, and more than the Cavaliers were in the South. . . . They formed the kernel of the distinctively and intensely American stock who were the pioneers of our people in their march Westward."

And, finally, may I quote the briefer eulogy by the most elaborate and painstaking American historian of the Ulster Scots? He described them as "that indomitable race whose pioneers, in unbroken ranks, from Champlain to Florida, formed the advance guard of civilization in its progress to

THE SCOT IN AMERICA AND

the Mississippi, and first conquered, subdued and planted the wilderness between.”¹

Count, then, that enormous principality that lies between the Allegheny Mountains and the Mississippi River as a Scottish conquest; and then turn to more recent conquests by individual Scotsmen. We have spoken of Robert Fulton, backed by Chancellor Livingston, as the pioneer steamboat builder. But there were two others, also of Scottish origin, in that field, William Henry and Joseph Rumsey. The telegraph depends to-day, all over the world, on the inventions of Joseph Henry and S. F. B. Morse, both of Scottish origin. The telephone comes closer to Scotland still, for Alexander Graham Bell was born in Edinburgh, while Thomas A. Edison's mother, Mary Elliott, was also of Scottish blood. So was Cyrus McCormick, who brought the wheatfields of the United States and Canada to British doors by the invention of his reaper. To that great list might well be added the man who built the first steamship to cross the Atlantic, Francis Fickett, of New York; and many of the leading railway builders and operators, from Strathcona and Mount Stephen, over the invisible border in Canada, and their efficient ally in New York, John S. Kennedy, to the managers of one of the greatest of eastern railways, the Pennsylvania, which has been almost continuously in the hands of men of Scottish blood, Thomas A. Scott, J. N. Mc-

¹ Charles A. Hanna : *The Scotch-Irish* (New York, 1902).

THE ULSTER SCOT

Cullough, James McCrea, Robert Pitcairn, Andrew Carnegie, Frank Thomson, and A. J. Cassatt. In the same list may well be included great ironmasters, from Grant, who built the first iron-furnace west of the Alleghenies, and John Campbell, the Ohio Scot, who first used the hot-blast in making pig-iron, to Andrew Carnegie, in whose colossal operations the iron and steel manufacture seemed to culminate.

If I have spoken lightly of one Scottish contribution as our first professional blackmailer, let me hasten to add that the early fast printing-presses were developed by Scott, Gordon, and Campbell; that the fast stereotype process necessary to complete their usefulness came also from an inventor of Scottish blood; that the first American newspaper, "The News-Letter," was published in Boston by John Campbell; that the first newspaper in the great "territory northwest of the Ohio River" was published at Cincinnati by William Maxwell; that the first religious newspaper in that territory was also started by a Scotsman of Chillicothe; and finally, that the two most noted editors in the United States were James Gordon Bennett and Horace Greeley, the one a Scot, the other an Ulster Scot. One of them may be credited with the conception of the modern newspaper as a universal news-gatherer, and the other, "our later Franklin," as Whittier called him, with the most efficient use ever made of it in America for the popularization of noble political conceptions, their

THE SCOT IN AMERICA AND

development in a triumphant political party, and in the overthrow of human slavery.

Let me close with a mere reference to our leading humorist, the most loved of American authors. Diplomacy knows him as one of our earlier Ministers to Spain. New York knows him best by Diedrich Knickerbocker and Peter Stuyvesant and the "Legend of Sleepy Hollow." He is still remembered, even in the England of great writers and of the richest literature of modern times, as the author of the "Sketch Book" and of "Bracebridge Hall." Washington Irving was born in New York, a few years after his parents had arrived from Scotland. May I add one other name, that of our best writer of short stories, and one of our most admired poets? Sir Edmund Bewley, of Dublin, has shown,¹ conclusively as I think, that (contrary to the prevalent American opinion) John Poe, the great-grandfather of Edgar Allan Poe, instead of being of Norman-French or Italian origin, was an Ulster Scot, who emigrated to Lancaster, Pennsylvania, from Dring, in County Cavan, about 1748.

If these remarks, too tedious I fear, and yet quite inadequate, have not entirely failed of their purpose, they must have shown how greatly Scotland's sons are responsible for the separation, for the War of Independence, for the conquest of the Mississippi Valley, for the Constitution, for the administration of the government, for the antislavery

¹ *New York Genealogical and Biographical Record* (January, 1907).

THE ULSTER SCOT

movement, and for the Civil War. A popular song by Scotland's foremost poet was really our Declaration and our Constitution "writ large:"

"The rank is but the guinea stamp,
The man 's the gowd, for a' that.
Then let us pray that come it may,
As come it will for a' that,
That man to man the warld o'er
Shall brithers be, for a' that."

Since the times that have been under consideration we have grown into a nation of ninety millions, beyond comparison the largest body of English-speaking people in the world. We have not forgotten our origin or our obligations. In all parts of the continental Republic hearts still turn fondly to the old land, thrilling with pride in its past, and hope, confident hope, for its future.

TALLEYRAND

TALLEYRAND

C'était un personnage étrange, redouté et considérable; il s'appelait Charles Maurice de Périgord; il était noble comme Machiavel, prêtre comme Gondi, défroqué comme Fouché, spirituel comme Voltaire et boiteux comme le diable. VICTOR HUGO : Choses Vues.

THE appearance of Talleyrand's memoirs has been long awaited with much curiosity and some alarm. Their author was believed to possess more dangerous secrets of high importance than any other man of his time; and whether or not he had friends to reward, it was known that he had many enemies to punish. When it was found that he had forbidden the publication of his manuscripts until thirty years after his death, the belief in their compromising and dangerous character was confirmed; and when, after the lapse of the required time, they were still withheld, they began to be looked upon as a species of historical dynamite, only to be exploded after everybody in danger had been removed from the field of human activity. But if this anticipation were disappointed—if it were found that the old diplomatist had been thinking, as was his wont, of himself rather even than of his enemies, and if his memoirs should not teem with scandalous revelations concerning great personages, it was still thought certain that they would undertake to vindicate what had been portrayed by the French writers and statesmen as well nigh the most scandalous career of the two centuries to which it belonged; and such a vindication,

TALLEYRAND

whether successful or not, would necessarily shed a flood of light on some of the greatest transactions and some of the most extraordinary men of modern times.

Whatever effect the memoirs may now have, the place of their author in history has not hitherto been materially changed in the years that have elapsed since his death. No revelations affecting French annals, from the days preceding the Revolution of '89 down to the reign of the Citizen King, have diminished Talleyrand's share in events or modified the accepted estimates of his work and character. His career was—and it remains—unparalleled in modern Europe for length and variety of distinguished service. Beginning with Louis XVI, from whom he received his first appointment, and from whom he went, later, with a letter to the King of England, he served in all eight known masters, not to reckon a great number of others who were, at one time or another, said to have him secretly in their pay. He was President of the Constituent Assembly which organized the French Revolution. He was sent to London on a secret mission with a passport from Danton. He was Minister of Foreign Affairs under the Directory, under the Consulate, under the Empire, under Louis XVIII, and under Louis Philippe. In diplomatic skill and success contemporary public opinion held him the first man of his period; that is to say, for half a century the first man in Europe. As to real influence on affairs, it is doubt-

TALLEYRAND

ful if any Minister since can be said to have exerted more, with the exceptions only of Bismarck and Cavour. Even they did not cover so wide a range or deal with such a bewildering variety of negotiations, extending over so great a time and furthering the views of so many masters.

Sir Henry Bulwer has a phrase that, in a way, measures him: "He was the most important man in the Constituent Assembly after Mirabeau; and the most important man in the Empire after Napoleon." But to gauge fairly his extraordinary public life, it must be remembered that he held place and gained in power for forty years after Mirabeau's death; and that having been one of the leading men of France before Napoleon was heard of, he remained a Minister and an Ambassador of France long after Napoleon had eaten out his heart at St. Helena.

Yet in spite of this amazing career, his countrymen have not been generally disposed to speak well of him. Napoleon said of him, and to him, that he was a silk stocking filled with filth. Carnot said: "He brings with him all the vices of the old *régime*, without having been able to acquire any of the virtues of the new one. He has no fixed principles; he changes them as he does his linen, and takes them according to the wind of the day—a philosopher, when philosophy is the mode; a republican now, because that is necessary in order to become anything. To-morrow he will declare for an absolute monarchy, if he can make anything

out of it. I don't want him at any price." Mirabeau called him "this vile, base trickster," and again wrote: "It is dirt and money that he wants. For money he has sold his honour and his friend. For money he would sell his soul—and he would be right; for he would be trading muck for gold." The very member of the Assembly who secured his recall from exile, Chénier, wrote of him: "This letter of the Abbé Maurice proves to me that after having been Anarchist and Orleanist, and not having been Robespierriest only because Robespierre would n't have him, he has now become a partisan of the Directory. This limp-foot, without respect for his bishopric, is like a sponge, which sucks up every liquid into which it is dropped, but, unlike the sponge, he never gives anything back. Here he is, recalled from exile yesterday, and proposing proscriptions for to-morrow. If the Directory wants blood, look out for your head;—Maurice will not refuse it."

Modern French writers, while of course less passionate, have been apt to agree in admitting his extraordinary venality, his treachery to his chiefs, and his lack of veracity. Lamartine admired him, but Louis Blanc was as severe as the bitterest of his contemporaries. Chateaubriand wrote of him, "When Monsieur Talleyrand is not conspiring, he is making corrupt bargains."¹ Guizot said he was a man of the court and of diplomacy,—not of government; that he was indifferent to means and

¹ "Quand Monsieur Talleyrand ne conspire pas, il trafique."

TALLEYRAND

to the end, almost indifferent provided he found in it a personal success. And, to quote but one opinion not coming from his countrymen, Gouverneur Morris said of him, "This man appears to me polished, cold, tricky, ambitious, and bad."

Few men, indeed, spoke well of him. Toward the close of his life, when he was ambassador in London, an attack was made upon him in the House of Lords by the Marquis of Londonderry. The Duke of Wellington offered a spirited defence. He had held official relations with M. de Talleyrand in most critical periods. Never had he encountered a man more vigorous and skilful in protecting the interests of his own country, or one more upright and honorable in his attitude toward other countries. Talleyrand was found the next day reading the report of this debate with tears in his eyes; and he said to his visitor, "I am all the more grateful to the Duke, since he is the one statesman in the world who has ever spoken well of me."

Later, while the diplomatist, now a very old man, was still in office, in the reign of Louis Philippe, Alexandre Sallé published in Paris a volume, undertaking to give an "impartial history of Talleyrand's political life." It bore upon its title-page as a motto, a verse by Barthélemy, which may be roughly rendered thus: "The incarnate lie, the living perjury, Prince de Bénévent; impenitent Judas, anointed with the sacred oil, he opens his career by betraying God himself. Alike at the altar and at the Court, the double apostate treats the

TALLEYRAND

State as he treated the Church." The introduction to this same work concludes with the story that Louis XVIII, when asked to express his opinion about his famous Foreign Minister, replied by quoting some lines of Corneille regarding Richelieu, of which this is the substance: "He has done me too much good that I should speak ill of him, and too much harm that I should speak well of him."¹

The evil in a public man's life is apt to attract wider attention than the good, and certainly his countrymen have made no exception to this rule in Talleyrand's favor. Taking his career from their records, what an extraordinary portrait is presented! Here are a few of the lines in it:

A profligate priest, who owed his start in life to an ill-flavored joke about the immorality of Paris, made in the drawing-room of Madame du Barry, the king's favorite.

A bishop, who was forced into the public journals to explain that the money he had recently made in gambling was not won in gambling-houses, but in clubs; and that it was not so much as reported—being only thirty thousand francs, instead of six or seven hundred thousand.

A confidential friend of Mirabeau, yet accused of poisoning him.

A Minister, and for years the intimate of Napoleon, yet suspected of a plot to assassinate him.

A great statesman, whose enormous and con-

¹ "Il m'a fait trop de bien pour en dire du mal,
Il m'a fait trop de mal pour en dire du bien."

TALLEYRAND

tinuous receipt of bribes from the beginning to the end of his long career is unquestioned.

A trusted Minister of Foreign Affairs, who, while in office under the Directory, thwarted their measures and plotted for the *coup d'état* of Napoleon; who, while in office under Napoleon, conspired with the Emperor of Russia and Austria to defeat his plans, and plotted for the return of the Bourbons; who, while in office under Louis XVIII, schemed for his overthrow, and for the accession of Louis Philippe.

The Constituent Assembly forbade his return to France. Pitt expelled him from England. Washington refused to receive him in America. The Pope excommunicated him.

And yet he lived to be summoned back to France and appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs for the revolutionary government; lived to return to England as ambassador from France, with the prestige of the most distinguished living diplomatist, to meet with a reception which could scarcely have been more respectful if he had been a crowned head; lived to give notice to the American Ministers Plenipotentiary in Paris that they must buy peace or leave the country; lived to have the Pope's excommunication withdrawn, and died in the odor of sanctity, with his king at his bedside, and the blessings of the Cardinal of Paris.

Many of the lineaments in this strange portrait drawn by the French historians are not to be much changed. There is little chance to erase the licen-

TALLEYRAND

tiousness, the treachery, the deceit, the monstrous venality. In recalling them, however, it must always be remembered that he can be only fairly judged by the standard of his time, which was lax to a degree we can hardly comprehend, especially with reference to the first of these vices and the last. When the American Commissioners resented Talleyrand's demand for a bribe of \$250,000 for himself, and a bigger one, called a loan, for the Directory, his representative said naïvely, "Don't you know that everything is bought in Paris? Do you dream that you can get on with this government without paying your way?"

It must be further remembered, and to his honor, that while he may be said to have betrayed her rulers, he never betrayed France. On the contrary, when he was secretly thwarting his masters, he was often helping his country. On notable occasions he rendered her service of incomparable value, and almost saved her from destruction as a first-class European power.

It was a touching eulogy pronounced on him at his death in varying phrases by both Thiers and Mignet, that he had always shown an aversion to persecutions and violence, and that he had never done harm to anybody. In the main this praise is deserved. "But," exclaimed Sainte-Beuve, in protest, "there are three points in his life which raise terrible doubts—the death of Mirabeau, the affair of the Duc d'Enghien, the affair of Membreuil." This last was the plot for the assassination of Napoleon.

TALLEYRAND

Talleyrand was perfectly aware of the shocking charges against himself in connection with the death of Mirabeau, but he makes no reference whatever to them in the portion of his memoirs treating of that period. The fact that they were believed at the time only shows the estimate then placed on him by some of his contemporaries. On the other hand, it must be said that many things make the story improbable, and that the so-called evidence is circumstantial and trivial. Napoleon repeatedly, in conversation and in writing, charged the murder of Duc d'Enghien to him. Talleyrand devotes one chapter to repelling the accusation, and fixing the responsibility for the crime on Napoleon himself. As to the plot to have Napoleon assassinated, even Talleyrand's enemies must admit that, while some circumstances were certainly suspicious, the proof of his complicity is fragmentary and not convincing.

No portrait of the man can be just which does not relieve by many light touches the sombre colors in which he has generally been depicted. He had the uniform courtesy and dignity of the old *régime*. He was the most accomplished of courtiers; the most correct of masters of ceremonies. He spoke well, and he wrote better—his few appearances at the Academy being really events. In the brilliant *salons* of the Court circles before the Revolution, he was a social lion. Women always liked and helped him. His witty sayings were the talk of Paris. In prosperity he was not arrogant; in times

TALLEYRAND

of trouble he bore himself with unruffled dignity and composure. When Napoleon denounced him in the presence of others, for treachery and venality, he merely said, as he went down the staircase, "What a pity that so great a man should have been so badly brought up." At another time, when Napoleon, then First Consul, asked him how he had become so rich (he was said to be already worth thirty millions of francs), he replied, "Nothing could be more simple, General; I bought Rentes the day before the 18th Brumaire (the day on which Napoleon seized power), and I sold them the day after." He had taken office under Louis XVIII, and was representing France at the Congress of Vienna, when Napoleon suddenly came back from Elba. He merely discovered that his liver was a little out of order, and he must go to Carlsbad. "The first duty of a diplomat," he observed, "after a Congress, is to take care of his liver." A few months later, after Waterloo, there were fresh symptoms of trouble with the same organ, while Louis XVIII regarded him askance; but the moment he was reappointed Minister of Foreign Affairs, all was well.

The evil Talleyrand did was chiefly to individuals. The good he did was to France. His public action in the Constituent Assembly was most important, and in the main most judicious. The French writers of that period, and even down to the day of his death, habitually ascribed sinister motives to every act, and professed to find his hidden

TALLEYRAND

hand in many excesses of the Revolutionary party. But he can be fairly judged now only by what he is known to have done; and by that standard there is no Frenchman who might not be proud of his record in the Constituent Assembly. He was the pioneer in the establishment of the metric system. He opposed the issue of the *assignats*, and accurately foretold their end. He presented an elaborate and well-considered plan for the reform of the finances, and the establishment of a sinking fund. He urged the suppression of lotteries. He presented in a comprehensive report and bill, a judicious system of national education, including a plan for the secularization of the schools. He favored the policy of peace and alliance with England. Bishop as he still was, he presented the measure for selling the property of the clergy, and thus secured for the almost bankrupt treasury of Louis XVI two milliards of francs. He carried the measure for abolishing the oppressive tithes of the clergy. In effect, this representative of the old nobility of France showed himself among the earliest to recognize the inevitable changes, and loyally endeavored to introduce reforms which would enable the monarchy to adapt itself to them without too violent a wrench. As time went on, he became convinced of the incapacity of the king to meet the crisis. Thenceforward he went with the tide, but strove rather to moderate and restrain it. The address to the people of France which the Assembly chose him to prepare, breathed throughout a spirit

TALLEYRAND

of genuine and almost republican devotion to the rights of man as we now understand them.

In other and widely differing occasions his influence was exerted to promote peace, and to discourage wars of mere ambition. He faithfully warned Napoleon against his Spanish policy, and fell into disgrace for a time through efforts to thwart it. With that Spanish policy, the downfall of Napoleon began. At Erfurt he protested against the schemes of wanton attack upon Austria, and even maintained private relations, and had nightly interviews, with the Czar Alexander to keep him from being led into them by Napoleon's importunities. At another stage in Napoleon's extraordinary aggressions he protested, "I do not want to be the torment of Europe." He lost his place in the cabinet of Louis XVIII because that king would not tolerate his plans for an alliance with England. Later on, he went to England as the ambassador of Louis Philippe, and there negotiated the treaty of 1834, which secured his country many years of peace and prosperity. He rendered useful service at the Peace of Amiens. At the Congress of Vienna his efforts were directed to an English rather than to a Russian alliance, and for this Thiers and others have criticised him, but the memoirs make an end of that criticism. In the negotiations before and after the "Hundred Days," Talleyrand is now seen to have rendered his country one of the greatest services, perhaps the greatest service, of his life. He may be said, perhaps, to have saved her from dismem-

TALLEYRAND

berment, and certainly to have preserved her great place in Europe.

Two other acts of Talleyrand's in widely different fields may here be cited, out of many which this generation should not allow to be forgotten: He proposed under the Consulate a practical system of Civil Service for the Department of Foreign Affairs. He was only permitted to introduce it in part, but his remarkable memorandum on the subject can be read with profit to this day. He defended the liberty of the Press under Louis XVIII against the tendency of the king and the court. Twice, in the Chamber of Peers, in successive years, he faced the reaction on this subject, and exposed the fatal path on which the court party wished to enter.

"Let us take for granted," he once said, "that what has been held good and useful by all the enlightened men of a country, without variation, during a succession of years of various governments, is a necessity of the time. Such, gentlemen, is the liberty of the Press. . . . I do not say that governments ought to hasten to recognize these new necessities. But when they have been recognized, to take back what was given, or—which comes to the same thing—to suspend it indefinitely, that is a rashness which I, more than any one else, hope may not bring a sad repentance to those who have conceived the convenient but pitiful thought. You must never compromise the good faith of a government. In our days it is not easy

TALLEYRAND

to deceive for a long time. There is some one who has more sense than Voltaire, more sense than Bonaparte, more than any Director, more than any Minister, past, present, or to come. That is everybody. To undertake or even persist in a controversy, where all the world is interested against you, is a fault; and to-day all political faults are dangerous." Students of current American politics are accustomed to the phrase, "Everybody is wiser than anybody." It may interest some of them to note that Talleyrand said so, before the American politicians.

The memoirs have been expected to clear up some of the dark charges against him, and to do much toward clarifying our views of that extraordinary epoch. They are sure to leave a better impression as to the work of Talleyrand himself. One of his most merciless critics, Sainte-Beuve, writing in 1867 as to the anticipations then felt concerning their publication, judiciously says: "I am persuaded that everything to be found in the letters and other writings of Talleyrand will give one a more favorable idea of him. People of genius like his never put the worst of their thoughts or of their lives on paper."

What we find that he did put on paper proves to be, and was intended by its author to be, as the French say, a "serious book,"—meaning thereby that whatever its variety of subjects or interest in treatment, it is written throughout with a constant view to a serious purpose. Whoever comes to it

TALLEYRAND

for the entertainment which a man with such a well-grounded reputation for wit and repartee might easily have furnished—for anecdotes, amusing reminiscences of court incidents, and, in general, for the table-talk of the ruling classes during the momentous periods of which it treats, will be disappointed. Whoever seeks details even of the author's own life will be disappointed. The memoirs are obviously meant to be the elaborate vindication of a great career; not an autobiography, nor a lively account of the author's times, not a collection of scandalous anecdotes, not even a series of malicious revelations of state secrets to the hurt of old enemies. Incidentally, some state secrets may be revealed; as a means of vindication some of the highest reputations are mercilessly assailed, and certainly some of the most important occurrences in the history of modern Europe are set in a new light. But the one controlling aim of Prince Talleyrand was to elucidate and vindicate his own large part in the events of his time.

He does it with a certain haughty dignity. He apologizes for nothing. He conceives that he gave to every government he served as much as he received from it, and he goes far toward adducing the proof. He narrates without passion, and reasons generally on the high plane of the real interests of his country, and the real interests of Europe, which he declares were not antagonistic.

The great periods in Talleyrand's career were the Constituent Assembly; the first years of his co-

TALLEYRAND

operation with Napoleon; the later years when he resisted but was still able to influence Napoleon's aggressions; the Congress of Vienna; and the last mission to England. On the first of these, for reasons hereafter suggested, the memoirs give less new information than was to be expected. Their account of the resistance to Napoleon enhances the estimate of Talleyrand's work at the epoch; and in their story of the transactions at Vienna we see for the first time in an adequate light, the great diplomatist at the height of his powers, and winning his worthiest triumphs. He went to Vienna the representative of a prostrate nation; and of a throne propped up by the bayonets of the army that had conquered it. He found the victors apportioning the spoil without reference to him, and without even admitting him to their conferences. He had neither physical power nor moral prestige behind him; no great army; no established institutions; hardly even a country; and the very instructions he bore he had written himself. He stood alone against Europe. And yet in a few months, by sheer force of intellect and skill, he had divided the allies, had secured the territorial integrity of his country, had negotiated most useful alliances, had greatly strengthened the French throne, had done something toward preventing the wanton partition of other nationalities, and had put France again in a leading position in Europe.

The popular idea was (in accordance with the hint which he himself threw out), that he forbade

TALLEYRAND

the publication of his manuscripts for so long a period after his death because they compromised too many reputations. It is quite as probable that his sense of the generally hostile judgment of his contemporaries, and particularly of his countrymen, was so keen that he wished to make his final appeal on behalf of his own reputation to another generation. On this theory of the purpose with which they were written, these memoirs have an interest from the points on which they are silent, as well as from those they elucidate. What he could not defend, or what he despised too much to care to defend, he ignores.

On the subject of his early and constant receipt of bribes there is a profound silence—in the first two volumes, at least, to which alone this paper refers. Yet his venality was so notorious and so monstrous that Napoleon denounced him for it again and again; details had repeatedly appeared in specific cases, and statements had been published during his lifetime, undertaking to show the various items and sources for his receipts of some thirty millions of francs, acquired in a few years of official life before the proclamation of the Empire.¹ It was a subject on which there was nothing to be said, and the sagacious diplomat knew when to say nothing.

But aside from Napoleon's charges, oral and written, as well as from those of French politicians and journals, which he perhaps thought he could

¹ In the life of Talleyrand by Louis Bastide, published in 1838, a few

TALLEYRAND

afford to ignore, there was one arraignment against him for blackmail, so direct, detailed, and authoritative, that he might have been expected to offer either an explanation, a denial, or a counter-attack. This was the case set forth by the three American Commissioners and Ministers Plenipotentiary, Messrs. Charles C. Pinckney, John Marshall, and Elbridge Gerry, in a series of official dispatches to

months only after Talleyrand's death, the following table is given of his receipts for three years :

| | <i>Francs</i> |
|---|------------------|
| From Portugal | 1,200,000 |
| From Austria, for the secret articles in the Convention of Campo Formio in 1797 | 1,000,000 |
| From Prussia, for having advised it of these articles, and prevented their execution | 1,000,000 |
| From the Elector of Bavaria | 500,000 |
| From the King of Naples, as the price of recognizing his neutrality | 500,000 |
| From the Pope | 150,000 |
| From the King of Sardinia | 300,000 |
| From the Grand Duke of Tuscany, in order that the French troops should respect his territory | 500,000 |
| From the Cis-Alpine Republic, in order to obtain a new agreement | 1,000,000 |
| From the Batavian Republic, for the same object | 1,200,000 |
| During the first six months of the Congress of Rastadt | 1,800,000 |
| For his share in the prizes made by French privateers on neutral vessels | 2,000,000 |
| From the Prince de la Paix | 1,000,000 |
| From the Grand Vizier | 500,000 |
| From the Hanseatic cities | 500,000 |
| Net profits from speculations in French and foreign funds during the negotiations of Lord Malmesbury at Lille | 1,500,000 |
| | <hr/> 14,650,000 |

To which should be added the enormous profits which he realized by his operations on the Stock Exchange on the 18th Brumaire. The author adds that all these details had been published in various works, and that M. Talleyrand had never dared to refute or correct these figures.

TALLEYRAND

the Secretary of State of the United States, transmitted to Congress in special messages by John Adams, then the President. In effect, Talleyrand, as Minister of Foreign Affairs under the Directory, refused the Commissioners official recognition unless he could be assured that they would give him personally a "gratification" of two hundred and fifty thousand dollars, and make a loan to the Directory of thirty-two millions of Dutch florins. He kept them dancing attendance for months, and long declined to take up their business at all, the demand for the money being meantime often repeated. Mr. Bellamy of Hamburg and Mr. Hautval, with one or two others whose names have been preserved in the State Department at Washington, but never disclosed, acted at first as intermediaries.¹ They presented the demands, orally and in writing, and persistently argued the necessity for compliance. They bore messages from Talleyrand, arranged for meetings with him, and some of them accompanied the Commissioners to these meetings. Talleyrand himself repeated the demand for the loan, exactly as they had presented it, and urged it with the same arguments. He even put it in writing, permitted one of the Commissioners to read it, and then withdrew and burnt the manuscript. He did not personally demand the "gratification" of a quarter of a million dollars, but merely said, in reply to Mr. Elbridge Gerry's remark that these

¹ *Treaties and Conventions between the United States and other Powers, with Notes on the Negotiations*, Government edition, p. 998.

TALLEYRAND

seemed much the same financial views Mr. Bellamy had been urging, "that the information Mr. Bellamy had given him was just, and might always be relied on."¹ Mr. Bellamy was the one who had been most pertinacious and explicit about the "gratification," and he was present at this conversation. The American Commissioners, through months of solicitation, sturdily refused the demands, and diplomatic relations between the two countries were finally broken off. The President, in communicating the last of the correspondence to Congress, said, "I will never send another Minister to France without assurances that he will be received, respected and honored as the representative of a great, free, powerful, and independent nation."² The documents leave no moral doubt of the story; they were printed in the volume comprising the President's official communications to Congress, and had been before the world for a quarter of a century when these memoirs were completed. The absence of a line of reference to them is as interesting in its way as anything Prince Talleyrand could have said on the subject.

He spent many months in the United States soon after the establishment of their independence, in which France had aided, and while a revolution, stimulated in part by the American example, was in progress in his own land; but he found, in his recollections of his American visit, almost nothing

¹ *American State Papers*, 1798-1803, vol. iv, p. 25.

² *Ibid.*, p. 137.

TALLEYRAND

suggested by either event, and nothing concerning the great man, then Chief Magistrate of the country which gave him hospitality. His lack of sympathy with republicanism, whether in the United States or in France, explains the one; and General Washington's refusal to receive him explains the other. Lord Lansdowne had given him a warm letter of introduction to Washington, setting forth that Talleyrand was really in exile because, although a bishop, he had desired to promote the general freedom of worship, and eulogizing him for having sacrificed his ambition in the Church to his devotion to principle. Washington possibly had his own views as to the extent to which Talleyrand's exile was due to his high religious principles. Hamilton's influence—always great—was joined to Lord Lansdowne's eulogy; but both were unavailing. The refusal to receive the French exile, however, was quietly put upon political grounds.

To men of this time it seems that no part of Talleyrand's life was more creditable or useful than that spent in the Constituent Assembly. But this scion of the old nobility of France had never changed his real political views. He was always a monarchist—in the Assembly, under the Directory, under Napoleon. He wished to assist Louis XVI, until he became convinced that the constitutional feebleness and obstinacy of that monarch were beyond help. "The Ministers," he says, "did not know that arbitrary power has no right to punish with moderation those who resist

TALLEYRAND

it, and that by its very nature it is required either to ignore or to crush its enemies." When he found that the king would not attempt in season to act upon such principles, Talleyrand abandoned the monarchy, and took care of himself. But while he went with the republican current, he was never republican. He found, therefore, little satisfaction in his honorable and brilliant record in the Constituent Assembly, and his account of it, in view of its real importance, is meagre.

So he touches very lightly his extraordinary relations to the Church. But he takes pains to make it clear that he was forced into the priesthood, and that he never felt any real calling for his sacred vocation. He is equally careful to show that in critical emergencies he had been able to do Rome service, and that the feelings of the Pope toward him were friendly.

The scandals of his private life as a priest and bishop receive only sufficient allusion to indicate his contempt for the subject. Thus his relations to the Countess Flahaut were known, and a letter to her had been published, in which, describing his exercise of his sacred functions at the great ceremony of the National Oath, in the Champ de Mars, he first hints at his own lack of religious faith, and then says: "I hope you feel to what divinity I yesterday addressed my prayers and my oath of fidelity. You alone are the Supreme Being whom I adore, and always will adore." The husband of the Countess afterward lost his head on the guillotine;

TALLEYRAND

and the widow, in exile at Hamburg, was about to contract another marriage, as Talleyrand, returning from his exile, came to the same place. When she heard of his purpose she requested him not to come, since she feared that his presence, coupled with the stories of their former relations, might embarrass her approaching marriage. The old man of eighty puts this in his memoirs as an amusing instance of feminine simplicity, and says that, of course, he paid no attention to the request. He goes on then to tell of meeting Madame de Genlis again, and of finding her unchanged—the same Madame de Genlis of whom in relation to the Duc d'Orléans he had taken occasion to say in his merciless portrait of that prince, “Madame de Genlis always surrendered early, to avoid scandal.”

Talleyrand evidently cherished bitter memories of his expulsion from England by Pitt, but he finds it well to pass the subject with the slightest possible mention. Nor does he refer at all to the strange letters he had previously sent his government, reporting that England was practically on the verge of a revolution like that of France, analyzing the inadequate military resources at hand to meet it, and proposing a plan for a French invasion and capture of Ireland. Eight days, he says, were sufficient to land sixty thousand men at twenty or thirty different points. As a matter of prudence they might perhaps go in the character of *émigrés*, so as to avoid arousing the suspicions of the government. “Once masters of the principal ports,”

TALLEYRAND

he continued, "once with the English fleet in our power, we can easily bring from France such reinforcements as are needed; and besides, as the march of our troops will have been preceded by a proclamation in the name of the sovereign people of France, addressed to the sovereign people of Great Britain and Ireland, as their faithful allies, no doubt this country will be thrown into a revolution more prompt and more happy than that of 1688. The elements for a republic are riper in England than they were in France four years ago, and it may take fewer weeks for England to accomplish this great and salutary change, than we spent years." ¹

With the gravest charge affecting his reputation as a public man, Talleyrand does deal at length, but after his own fashion. He makes not the slightest concealment of his efforts to thwart the plans of his masters. He narrates them often in detail, with entire simplicity and the utmost directness. But the narrative always tends to show that the course he pursued was in the interest of France, and that the rulers he thwarted either did not know that interest or wished to sacrifice it for their own. Thus, after telling how he had secretly labored with the Czar Alexander, at the Erfurt Conference, to defeat Napoleon's plan for an alliance against Austria, and had succeeded, he calmly says, "It is the last service I was able to render to Europe while Napoleon continued to reign, and

¹ Letter of Talleyrand to Lebrun, dated October 10, 1792.

TALLEYRAND

that was, in my opinion, a service rendered also to him." There is nowhere a hint that in his mind private and surreptitious conferences with the sovereigns of other countries to defeat the plans of the sovereign whose representative and confidential adviser he was, had the slightest immoral quality.

But he takes care to show Napoleon in a light that must make the world rather rejoice at seeing such a man betrayed. The memoirs scarcely touch a critical point in the emperor's career without dealing him a stab. They make him paltry in the business of the divorce. They picture him as an ignorant blusterer in the affairs of the Concordat. They detail his cheap devices to gain the admiration of men of letters. They show with malicious precision how he laboriously copied out the draft of a treaty which Talleyrand had prepared for him, that the Czar, finding it in the emperor's handwriting, might think it was his own work. They preserve his letter, complaining that the heir to the Spanish throne wrote him as "My Cousin," and requiring the Minister to instruct this prince of ancient royal lineage that the only word proper for him to use in addressing Napoleon was "Sire." They stoop even to such trifles as his fretting, on the evening of Austerlitz, over some gossip of a fancied slight to him by the society of the Faubourg St. Germain. Everywhere they paint him as heartless, vain, vulgar, wanton in attack, ungenerous and pitiless to the defeated, untruthful, proud of his ability to de-

TALLEYRAND

ceive, wholly without principle, and without gratitude. And they do this, not so much by ascribing to him these qualities, as by the careful and precise narration of incidents that exhibit them.

The inference which Prince Talleyrand expects his readers to draw from all this is plain. It was right, when in power, under such a man, to thwart him when it seemed needful in the interest of France. When this could no longer be done, it was right to prepare the way for a Bourbon successor—in the interest of France. When the restored Bourbons did not meet his views, it was right to plot for their displacement by the son of that Duc d'Orléans whom he had painted as a brainless and heartless monster—in the interest of France. In other cases the suggested defence is always the same; wherever he deceived her rulers, he did it all for the good of France.

No doubt the plea will have force, especially with his countrymen. Moralists indeed will regard with surprise the claim that a Minister, though holding on to his office, no longer owes personal loyalty to his sovereign, when in his judgment the sovereign is sacrificing the interests of his country to his own. They will ask whether, even in such great emergencies, the end can be admitted to justify the means. Whatever the answer, Frenchmen, at any rate, and very possibly the world at large, will have a kindlier feeling for the veteran public servant who is able to show that, even at such cost, he did in great crises serve his country.

TALLEYRAND

The memoirs will not change the world's verdict on the profligate Abbé of Périgord and Bishop of Autun. They will not lighten the censure on the Foreign Minister who made merchandise of his treaties, and became a millionaire on bribes. They will not make the world think it honorable in him to have deceived or betrayed in turn almost every man under whom he held office. Nevertheless, they will heighten and broaden his fame. The old man was wise, as usual, in making his appeal to a later generation. He played a great part; and as its proportions are revealed, the space for him in the history of his times must be materially enlarged.

BYRON

BYRON

THERE was a time when no English poet was so popular as Byron, and so universally read either in England or on the Continent. To borrow his own graphic phrase, he woke one morning and found himself famous. Then there came a time when no English poet was so odious. The disapproval aroused by his acts, his utterances, and what the world thought it knew of his character, extended to his work. Men still read it, but often only to dwell on the baleful brilliancy of the light that had gone astray. The burst of amused contempt in which Jeffrey (or Brougham for him) had torn to pieces the callow poet-peer and his "Hours of Idleness," seemed but a summer zephyr compared with the storm which later beat upon this sudden favorite, after he had triumphed in "Childe Harold" only to sink to the miasms of "Don Juan," "The Waltz," and their like. Other and nobler work appeared, which compelled the world again to readjust its estimate. At last, too soon, too sadly, in exile, came Missolonghi, and the end. Once more the pendulum of public approval swung to and fro. When it finally settled—not very far from a just medium—the century had passed its meridian, new tastes had developed, new men arisen, and Byron was already relegated to the shelf of authors who *had* been favorites—to the shelf where we now range Scott and Wordsworth and Coleridge, with their elders, Pope, Goldsmith,

BYRON

Addison, and yet greater names,—men still to be read on occasion, but no longer an intimate, essential part of the active literary life of the time.

We need not shut our eyes to the fact that these changes were partly due to a frequent instinct of the public to weigh the worth of Lord Byron's verse by the worthlessness of his life. This last he himself persisted in forcing upon the attention of the public, and he seemed to take an impish, if not insane, delight in making the worst of it. His habitual pose was worse than his real wickedness. We may as well admit that his conduct was full of faults, and that there was no very long period in his life when any decent society could have regarded him as a desirable member. But he was never as bad as he painted himself; there were always people of refinement who clung to him; and against his admitted delinquencies it is only charitable to remember his lamentable heredity, physical misfortune, tortured nerves, precocious and phenomenally vehement affections, uncontrollable passions, exaggerated pride, as well as his loneliness and his utter lack of early guidance. With these admissions, and these offsets, it is as wise to close that chapter. The flood of biographical speculation as to just how bad he really was, is not profitable; and we may utterly ignore the gross stories retailed by women, who knew enough to be in better business, which first saw the light a third of a century ago in an American magazine that was then thought an expression of the country's cul-

BYRON

ture. It puts a pleasanter taste in the mouth to recall that he had the early recognition and held to the end the kindly regard of that sweetest and bravest soul in British literature, Sir Walter Scott, as well as the affection of Thomas Moore and Percy Bysshe Shelley, and the lofty eulogium of Goethe himself.

An American may be permitted a tenderer feeling toward the dethroned literary monarch than is quite customary now in the land of his birth. We do not forget his sympathy with our struggle for the rights of Englishmen, or his quick recognition of our foremost man. I may cite here Childe Harold's despairing question:

“Can freedom find no champion and no child
Such as Columbia saw arise when she
Sprung forth a Pallas, armed and undefiled?
Or must such minds be nourished in the wild,
Deep in the unpruned forest, midst the roar
Of cataracts, where nursing Nature smiled
On infant Washington? Has Earth no more
Such seeds within her breast, or Europe no
such shore?”

And, again, we may recall the closing stanza of his “Ode to Napoleon Bonaparte:”

“Where may the wearied eye repose
When gazing on the Great;
Where neither guilty glory glows
Nor despicable state?
Yes—one—the first—the last—the best—
The Cincinnatus of the West,

BYRON

Whom envy dared not hate,
Bequeathed the name of Washington
To make men blush there was but one!"

And still again:

"A higher title, or a loftier station,
Though they may make Corruption gape and stare,
Yet, in the end, except in Freedom's battles,
Are nothing but a child of Murder's rattles.
And such they are—and such they will be found:
Not so Leonidas and Washington,
Whose every battle-field is holy ground,
Which breathes of nations saved, not worlds un-
done."

And, to select only one more example, when his Greek enterprise was taking shape in his teeming brain, it led to this significant entry in his Journal:

"To be the first man (*not* the Dictator), not the Sylla, but the Washington or Aristides, the leader in talent and truth, is to be next to the Divinity."

When we consider the nature of England, and indeed when we consider the history of the nineteenth century, the reason why Lord Byron's work and fame seem now less vital than they were becomes plain enough. He was perpetually in revolt. His work is the literature of revolt, and for the most part of unwise and unsuccessful revolt. It was revolt against society; revolt against those features of morality on which society sets up the most exacting standard; revolt against his order; revolt against theology if not against religion; and

BYRON

finally, revolt against many established opinions, most established institutions, and against some established governments. Still his revolutions were all failures. They were either too late or too early — one or two may have been magnificent, but they were not war. Rousseau did inspire a revolution; Byron spent much of his time glorifying the disdain, the revenge, and the despair of baffled conspirators. And between the disdain and the despair which were the favorite emotions of his heroes, depicted again and again until they became monotonous, he rarely failed to introduce the debauchery. That critic pronounced a kind verdict who declared him “the favorite poet of all the most high-minded conspirators and socialists of Continental Europe for half a century.”

Yet even in his worst moments of utter perversity, when eager to maintain his affected pose as the most startlingly, sensationally, picturesquely wicked of Englishmen, he passed in an instant to strains of surpassing sweetness when he thought of his daughter or his sister—to pictures of feminine charm and purity and grace which neither English literature nor the classics of the world can ever afford to lose from their immortal treasures. Who does not know and sympathize with the exclamation of the idolatrous parent?

“Is thy face like thy mother’s, my fair child,
Ada, sole daughter of my house and heart?
When last I saw thy young blue eyes, they smiled,
And then we parted — ”

BYRON

Or who can fail to cherish that parent-poet's
picture of the hapless Bride of Abydos?

“Soft as the memory of buried love;
Pure as the prayer which Childhood wafts above;
Such was Zuleika, such around her shone
The nameless charms, unmarked by her alone —
The light of love, the purity of Grace,
The mind, the music breathing from her face,
The heart whose softness harmonized the whole,
And oh! that eye was in itself a soul.”

Or who would not envy the Giaour the memory
he recalled in his last confession?

“She was a form of life and light,
That seen, became a part of sight;
And rose, where'er I turned mine eye,
The Morning-star of Memory.

“Yes, love indeed is life from heaven,
A spark of that immortal fire,
With Angels shared, by Allah given
To lift from earth our low desire.”

Or who does not love recalling again and again
this dream from the “Hebrew Melodies”?

“She walks in beauty, like the night
Of cloudless climes and starry skies;
And all that's best of dark and bright
Meet in her aspect and her eyes:

“The smiles that win, the tints that glow,
But tell of days in goodness spent,
A mind at peace with all below,
A heart whose love is innocent.”

BYRON

But when we consider England again, or indeed when we consider human nature within the range of modern civilization, we see why even exquisite passages like these, which without a doubt fairly revealed one side of the poet's nature, failed when the first storm arose—perhaps still fail to earn general forgiveness for Lord Byron. He addressed his greatest poem to his fair child, sole daughter of his house and heart; but could not finish even that without another attack upon her mother, or the boast that

“ . . . a far hour shall wreak
The deep, prophetic fullness of this verse
And pile on human hearts the mountain of my curse.”

He put in the same poem a tender and not unnatural address to his sister, with a longing for her companionship. He even addressed its earlier cantos, in pure and graceful lines, to a child of eleven, the daughter of a distinguished friend. And yet, in this noblest of his works, the high-water mark of his better powers, consecrated thus in the eyes of the world to his daughter, his sister, and the child of his friend, he could not forego soiling with an occasional licentious touch, the stately and splendid display of a poetical genius hardly equalled in the century.

The depths to which he fell, in some of his poems of the Venetian period, reveal with painful frankness the other side of his amazing literary character. Perhaps it is well enough depicted in his own lines about Manfred:

BYRON

“This should have been a noble creature; he
Hath all the energy which would have made
A goodly frame of glorious elements,
Had they been wisely mingled; as it is,
It is an awful chaos—light and darkness,
And mind and dust, and passions and pure thoughts,
Mixed and contending, without end or order.”

I shall not discuss the worst of his works. They were never really popular with people whose approval he would have seriously valued; but they were enormously read at the time. They have long since ceased to enjoy even that lowest tribute which misdirected genius sometimes shares with the vulgar output of the gutters. Still, even yet they ought not to be introduced to collegians save with the same warning Lady Caroline Lamb is said to have written about their author after her first meeting; they are “mad, bad and dangerous to know.” But they cannot be quite dismissed, even with that apt summary. They are also witty to a degree; full of sparkle and of abandon, extraordinary in their quick changes of mood, tone, subject, and place; crowded with epigrams and stinging with personal allusions. They seem bent on putting the worst construction on everything and everybody, and then on finding the whole sorry picture—treachery, betrayal, hypocrisy, or shameless vice—an equal matter for unrestrained amusement. They try to prove nearly everybody as bad as he constantly paints himself; and specially to seek consolation for his own matrimonial infelicity by con-

BYRON

sidering marriage as a rule unhappy, most wives wanton, and all men false. Their attacks on well-known personages outrage most limitations that gentlemen are expected to recognize; yet these seem made, sometimes perhaps for revenge, but more often for the mere fun of showing how outrageous he can be, or of annoying his family, members of his order, and former friends by exhibiting himself as the most unscrupulous madcap that ever put a splendid brain to such uses. Then again come flashes of magnanimous praise for old foes like Jeffrey; and, more striking still, the warmest and most grateful returns to every patient soul that still showed him appreciation or kindness in spite of his excesses. For the one extreme, we may remember his frequent tone toward Southey and Wordsworth; for the other, his sincere and obviously heartfelt tributes to Sir Walter Scott, to Thomas Moore, to Hobhouse, and especially to Goethe.

Even at the worst, he would suddenly pass from wearisome pages of mere degradation of his powers to a lyric that will set the pulses of all men throbbing while brave deeds are honored or liberty is loved. Take these disconnected lines from one that still shines in its base surroundings—a gem, in fact, that on the stretched forefinger of all Time sparkles forever:

“The mountains look on Marathon,
And Marathon looks on the sea;

BYRON

And, musing there an hour alone,
I dreamed that Greece might still be free.

“Must we but weep o’er days more blest?
Must we but blush? Our fathers bled.
Earth! render back from out thy breast
A remnant of our Spartan dead!
Of the three hundred grant but three,
To make a new Thermopylae!

“Place me on Sunium’s marble steep,
Where nothing save the waves and I
May hear our mutual murmurs sweep;
There, swan-like, let me sing and die;
A land of slaves shall ne’er be mine—
Dash down yon cup of Samian wine!”

There has been some misdirected sympathy wasted on the beginning of Lord Byron’s career. “The Hours of Idleness” was a thin production, even for a clever lad of only eighteen; and the stilted preface, with its exaggerated emphasis on his youth, and its high-stepping parade of his ancestors and his noble blood, contrasts absurdly enough with his own real feelings in his black moods, on the same subject. The “Edinburgh Review” might easily have ignored this first publication. But the game was too tempting, and the “Review” really gave it only what it deserved. But it also gave the confident and audacious young man his opportunity, and taught him his strength. The retort in “English Bards and Scotch Reviewers” was obviously modelled on Pope. It did not

BYRON

equal that original, but for the occasion and for the youth it was singularly and most unexpectedly effective; and, from the day of its publication, Lord Byron had literary immortality absolutely in his own hands. Three years later (when he was still only twenty-four) the first part of the poem on which his better fame rests was published, and six years after that came its matchless climax. In the same interval appeared most of the other works by which his admirers prefer to remember him, though one of the greatest was three years later still.

By then it had been burnt into his consciousness that he had "squandered his whole summer while it still was May;" and with some tremendous effort, after the worst of the work in Venice and the perverse publication of so much of it which his friends resisted and deplored, he summoned up all his powers, and gave to the world in that memorable year of 1821 (the thirty-third of his age, and practically the last of his valuable literary productivity) one poem at least, "Cain," which in sheer power and majesty has not been surpassed since Milton. Sir Walter Scott even declared that "Byron had matched Milton on his own ground." But the circumstances hardly permitted this to be an impartial verdict. If there were not other reasons for demur, it would be enough to consider the sad sincerity of the great Puritan, and the frivolous affectations of the poet of the regency. The one in profound faith touched the noblest notes in the poetic diapason with the exalted fervor belonging to his

BYRON

theme. The other seemed to have no faith in God, or man, or woman, or in himself. He put into the mouth of our first mother as fearful a curse upon the first murderer as ever chilled human veins:

“May the grass wither from thy feet! the woods
Deny thee shelter! earth a home! the dust
A grave! the sun his light! and heaven her God!”

And then, in forwarding it to his publishers, he described it in this flippant way: “There’s as pretty a piece of imprecation for you, when joined to the lines already sent, as you may wish to meet within the course of your business. But don’t forget the addition of these three lines, which are clinchers to Eve’s speech.” Imagine John Milton sending Satan’s speech in “Paradise Lost” to *his* publishers with such a message! As little was he like our other and earlier literary divinity, Shakespeare. That unchallenged master knew all moods, all heights and depths of the human mind. Byron really knew to the bottom only the extravagantly loving or the defiant and revengeful ones. His heroes were generally haughty or cruel, wicked and false. He fancied himself full of the noblest aspirations, but in Morley’s phrase, “the higher part of him was constantly dragged down by the degrading reminiscences of the brutishness of his youth.” Perhaps it might be as truthfully and more plainly put by saying that he was a creature magnificently endowed in intellect, with many noble instincts, but without a moral nature.

BYRON

All that prodigious talent could do, Byron did. If only sincerity and some honest manly belief in anything could have been added, that long, gloomy list of astonishing achievements, "Cain," "Manfred," "The Corsair," "Lara," "Mazeppa," "Marino Faliero," would have been lifted to another level, and some of them might, perhaps, have approached "matching Milton on his own ground." As it is, the comparison seems almost like sacrilege. Lofty as is the tone of "Cain," majestic as are many of its isolated passages, the reader ends its perusal with a feeling that it has been all vague and monstrous, that it leads nowhere, and that it has dragged up again the awful, bewildering problem of the existence of evil in the world, only to make it appear more appalling than ever—offering about it mere negations and complaint, without one ray of illuminating light. "Manfred" is often as majestic, but more unsatisfying, and it keeps you wondering how far he deliberately wishes to have the reader at every turn reminded of himself. In this respect "The Corsair" and "Lara," with all their splendor, breathe throughout the same perplexity.

"Cain" was no doubt the fierce revolt which the stern Scotch theology he was taught in his youth wrought on such a rebellious and defiant nature. An elderly gentleman, still living recently, in Nottingham, cherished recollections of talk some years ago with a lady much his senior, who often told of having seen the young Byron limping down

BYRON

Fletcher Gate on Sunday mornings, on his way to the High Pavement Chapel. The grandfather of another citizen is also one, I am told, who handed on this significant fact in the poet's earliest residence in the place. Now this High Pavement Chapel was originally Presbyterian, though later, according to Coleridge, who preached in it in 1796, it comprised Unitarians, Arians, and Trinitarians. Byron found there a Presbyterian form of church government, united with great freedom of thought on religious matters. But the creed imposed upon the impressionable child in the Scotch Presbyterian church at Aberdeen is the creed against which the whole mad, despairing but sublime "Mystery" of "Cain" is levelled, and to which so many wild outbursts in his other works are to be referred.

His youthful life in Nottingham was marked, according to local tradition, by two other interesting facts. He was tortured by a quack in ignorant efforts to cure his lameness; and taught by an American refugee, from whom he may have imbibed other revolutionary ideas besides his estimate of Washington. He held this tutor long after, at any rate, in the grateful memory which he was apt to keep for all who ever rendered him a kindness.

In most of Byron's poems that naturally classify themselves in gloom and power with "Cain," one figure constantly recurs. Sometimes

"There was a laughing Devil in his sneer,
That raised emotions both of rage and fear ;

BYRON

And where his frown of hatred darkly fell,
Hope, withering, fled, and Mercy sigh'd farewell!"

At other times this figure was depicted merely as

"Lord of himself — that heritage of woe,
That fearful empire which the human breast
But holds, to rob the heart within of rest."

Then again the figure soliloquized:

" . . . I have done men good,
And I have met with good, even among men —
But this avail'd not: I have had my foes,
And none have baffled, many have fallen before me —
But this avail'd not: Good or evil, life,
Powers, passions, all I see in other beings,
Have been to me as rain unto the sands,
Since that all nameless hour."

Here is the most joyous strain in this strange
figure's whole wild creed:

" . . . if we do but watch the hour,
There never yet was human power
Which could evade, if unforgiven,
The patient search and vigil long
Of him who treasures up a wrong."

And here was a fact that seemed to give him comfort:

"He knew himself detested, but he knew
The hearts that loath'd him crouched and dreaded
too.
Lone, wild and strange, he stood alike exempt
From all affection and from all contempt."

BYRON

When one recurs often to the many passages like these, and then to his equally frequent allusions to the perversity of the British public in identifying the author with his creations, one would be led, even now, merely on internal evidence, to suspect that such an identification was probably what he desired. There need surely be no wonder that when his works were pouring from the press, this idea was nearly universal. He frankly abandoned the effort at distinguishing between "Childe Harold" and himself in the preface to the last canto; and it would puzzle some people to interpret the comment in his *Journal* on the story Hobhouse brought that he was his own hero in "The Corsair," and had actually been concerned himself in piratical ventures, except on the theory that in a moment of bad swagger he really wanted to put about also that gross report.

And yet, in frequent and more natural moods, this would-be misanthrope was really one of the warmest-hearted of men. In his defence of the Nottingham strikers he hit upon a phrase inspired with the same nobility which marked Burke's declaration that you cannot frame an indictment against a whole nation. "Can you commit," exclaimed the Nottingham peer,—“can you commit a whole county to their own prisons?” When he heard, years after, that a poor Italian was condemned to the stake “for having stolen a wafer-box out of a church,” he records that “Shelley and I are of course up in arms against this piece of

BYRON

piety." His Continental influence fanned the revolutionary flame against the family, against religion, against property; but he really had, himself, no deep-seated wish to overthrow either—least of all the last. He simply had not thought it out. Unlike Rousseau, he did not realize whither his wild talk tended. When a bereaved husband sent him a copy of a written prayer for Lord Byron, found among his wife's papers, instead of being enraged at the intrusion and the offence to his supposed creed, the poet wrote that he had read the prayer for himself with all the pleasure that can arise from so melancholy a topic; that in the course of reading the story of mankind he never met with anything so unostentatiously beautiful; and that he "would not exchange the prayer of the deceased in his behalf for the united glory of Homer, Caesar, and Napoleon, could such be accumulated upon a living head." He closed his singularly tender letter of acknowledgment to his bereaved clerical correspondent with an appeal to be thought capable of knowing and approving the better course, however much the tendency to follow the worse one might have been applied to his conduct.

Byron's fame would be better founded, if it did not rest on so many works. Here, too, he approved the better course, but held to the worse. In a letter to his publisher he deliberately laid down the proposition that a good long poem was impossible—he, the author of one poem in sixteen

BYRON

cantos, of three poems of high importance in one year, of two in another, and of six in the last year of his really valuable literary activity. Murray had written that half of the third and fourth cantos of a certain work was very good. "You are wrong," was Lord Byron's answer, "for if it were, it would be the finest poem in existence. Where is the poetry of which one half is good? Is it the Aeneid? Is it Milton's? Is it Dryden's? Is it any one's except Pope's and Goldsmith's, of which all is good? If one-half be good, what would you have more? No—no; *no* poetry is *generally* good—only by fits and starts—and you are lucky to get a sparkle here and there. You might as well want a mid-night all stars as rhyme all perfect." It must be admitted that, in spite of his genius, his practice sometimes conformed to his theory! A quarter of a century later, and on another continent, another man of irregular genius and lamentable life advanced substantially the same idea. "I hold," said Edgar Allan Poe, "that a long poem does not exist. I maintain that the phrase, 'a long poem' is simply a flat contradiction in terms. . . . I would define in brief the poetry of words as 'The rhythmical creation of beauty.' Its sole arbiter is taste. With the intellect or with the conscience it has only collateral relations, and unless incidentally, it has no concern whatever either with duty or with truth."

With one part of this ghastly creed, Byron sometimes appeared in accord. His pen did at such times

BYRON

seem to have no concern whatever either with duty or with truth. He abandoned his country and the public duty to which he was born, as well as his circle of private duties. He prefaced the first canto of "Childe Harold" with a French extract to the effect that "I hated my country. All the impertinences of divers peoples among whom I have lived have reconciled me to it." He could even picture his native land to foreign eyes as—

“ . . . of those true sons the Mother,
Who butchered half the earth and bullied t’other.”

And still there was no approval he so hungered for as that of his old circle and his native land. From the superb opening of the fourth canto in "Childe Harold," the vision of "Venice sitting in state, throned on her hundred isles," he turned almost at once, as so often before, to his personal griefs, but with this significant admission:

“I twine
My hopes of being remembered in my line
With my land’s language.”

He even came again to boast of his English birth-right; and his dreams almost seemed to turn to Westminster Abbey as his final home:

“Yet was I born where men are proud to be,
Not without cause; and should I leave behind
The inviolate island of the sage and free,
And seek me out a home by a remoter sea,
Perhaps I loved it well; and should I lay
My ashes in a soil which is not mine,

BYRON

My spirit shall resume it—if we may
Unbodied choose a sanctuary. . . .
If my fame should be, as my fortunes are,
Of hasty growth and blight, and dull Oblivion bar
My name from out the temple where the dead
Are honour'd by the nations—let it be—
And light the laurels on a loftier head!”

Byron's real inspiration was apt to be personal or political rather than poetic; and also apt to be invoked by some revolt against existing order. It is pitiful to note how much even of his finest verse is occupied with his family troubles and personal griefs; with his firm determination to bear them in silence, and with the melodious volubility in which he continues, just the same, to pour them forth—meanwhile revelling in ridicule of the conventions which he defies. In politics his very first appearance in the House of Lords was in a generous and humane appeal for men in his own county, engaged in a lawless strike which no one would now justify, against the use of machinery in Nottingham industries. The earliest effect of his travel was discontent with his country's course in Portugal. Then came hostility to the established order in Italy, dissatisfaction with government in Spain, hostility to Turkey and to Austria, and a resolute effort to arouse the Greeks to resistance. In short, to use the language in which he thought to describe his own principles,

“ . . . plain, sworn, downright detestation
Of every despotism in every nation,”

BYRON

flamed out at every opportunity throughout his work. His sympathies with Ireland led him into wild outbursts against Castlereagh. With Greece they carried him sometimes into bitter attacks on Lord Elgin, for the crime of bringing the Elgin marbles to the British Museum; oftener into stinging reproaches to the Greeks themselves; or into inspiring confidence like this:

“For Freedom’s battle, once begun,
Bequeathed by bleeding Sire to Son,
Though baffled oft, is ever won.
Bear witness, Greece, thy living page!
Attest it many a deathless age!”

or, again, into enduring laments like this:

“A thousand years scarce serve to form a State;
An hour may lay it in the dust; and when
Can man its shattered splendour renovate,
Recall its virtues back, and vanquish Time and Fate?
And yet how lovely in thine age of woe,
Land of lost gods and god-like men, art thou!”

But Greece was always the object for which he kindled quickest. Many of his finest passages throb with enthusiasm for her history and her art; with love and hope for the land itself. He sustained the cause of Modern Greece with his fortune as well as his genius and his fame; and at last laid down his life in a wild but nobly disinterested and generous effort in her service.

I have ventured to speak of “Childe Harold” as the high-water mark of his genius. We should

BYRON

lose much if no other work of Byron's was preserved, but his fame might rest securely on that alone. In its splendid close Italy was largely its field, and a hundred Italian gems in it will occur to every student of the poet—the wonderful picture of Venice with which it opens; the apostrophe to “Rome, my country! city of the soul;” the exquisite descriptions of natural scenery, as of Clitumnus, or of art, as of St. Peter's, or of the Venus de Medici, “drunk with beauty;” the reflections on the Imperial Mount:

“Admire, exult, despise, laugh, weep—for here
There is such matter for all feeling;—Man!
Thou pendulum betwixt a smile and tear,
Ages and realms are crowded in this span.”

The lot of Venice is whimsically described as shameful to the nations, most of all to Albion:

“ . . . the Ocean Queen should not
Abandon Ocean's children; in the fall
Of Venice think of thine, despite thy watery wall.”

He hated Austria on account of her rule of Venice; though Venice in her day was no less arbitrary. But he lived there, and this, like nearly all his pet national and other aversions, was purely personal and illogical. He scorned Florence's rich tombs of merchant dukes, while she was still without the tomb of Dante; and went into a droll fury with all French poetry, because a great French poet wrote one depreciating line about Tasso:

BYRON

“And Boileau, whose rash envy could allow

No stain which shamed *his* country's creaking lyre,
That whetstone of the teeth—monotony in wire!”

He made a charming reference to Marceau, who was freedom's champion, and had kept the whiteness of his soul, so men o'er him wept, and his mourners were two hosts, his friends and foes. He could praise Voltaire, too, whose wit, like the wind, “blew where it listed, laying all things prone, —now to o'erthrow a fool, and now to shake a throne.” But it enraged him that Napoleon should be compared to Caesar—“a bastard Caesar,” he exclaimed. He felt constrained to add that Caesar himself was “justly slain;” but followed with more denunciation of Napoleon's reign of blood, with the sudden burst, “Renew Thy rainbow, God,” and the demand, “Can tyrants but by tyrants conquered be?” Hatred of anything he thought tyranny, generous if indiscriminating sympathy with the oppressed, shine, in fact, on every page. But enough. Let me only add that a fitting climax to the great poem comes in the unmatched passage beginning

“Oh! that the Desert were my dwelling place,”

and ending with the apostrophe to the ocean, of which it is not too much to say that no more splendid addition to English verse has been made, from Byron's day to this.

The wild, often unreasoning love of liberty which pulsates throughout his work, and was con-

BYRON

secrated in his death; and the enormous spiritual force which this love of liberty and his genius gave him throughout Europe, made him a social solvent, rather than a regenerator of society; a solvent of stifling precedents and of arbitrary rules, rather than an emancipator. Wherever his prodigious influence in that seething time extended, he unsettled things, but they have been the better since for his activities. He helped start tendencies then which, under wiser guidance, before the end of the century had changed the face of Great Britain and of Europe.

When all his sparkling froth and dull noisome sediment have been rejected, we are still able to hold up for admiration and instruction a body of noble English verse, hardly surpassed, perhaps hardly equalled, in the whole century whose dawn he illuminated. It is verse, too, wherein the pretence utterly disappears that it must be without relation to truth or duty, for it breathes the wider, more humane truths to which the world began growing up through the nineteenth century; it is a bugle call to duty, and its strong, lasting note is Liberty.

“Yet, Freedom! yet thy banner, torn, but flying,
Streams like the thunder-storm *against* the wind;
Thy trumpet voice, though broken down and dying,
The loudest still the tempest leaves behind:
The tree hath lost its blossoms, and the rind,
Chopp’d by the axe, looks rough and little worth,
But the sap lasts, — and still the seed we find

BYRON

Sown deep even in the bosom of the North ;
So shall a better spring less bitter fruit bring forth."

That spring has come ; his anticipations have been more than realized. He builded better than he knew when he set the solvent power of his verse to weakening old conventions and so much of the old political and social order. If we cannot credit him with seeking or foreseeing the real results, we must credit him at any rate with a brilliant share in making them possible.

AN EDITOR'S REFLECTIONS

I

JOURNALISM AS A CAREER

JOURNALISM AS A CAREER

I HAVE been asked to say something of Journalism, and of schemes of special instruction for it. The Chancellor and Faculty have had in view, however, no absurd plan for turning raw boys into trained editors by the easy process of running over some new curriculum. West Point cannot make a soldier; and the University of the City of New York cannot give us assurance of an editor. But West Point *can* give the training, discipline, special knowledge, without which the born soldier would find his best efforts crippled, and with which men not born to military greatness may still do valuable service. There were thousands of brave men around Toulon, but only Napoleon could handle the artillery. It was the scientific training that gave his warlike genius its opportunity and its tools of victory. West Point does the same for the countless Napoleons whom (according to the popular biographies) Providence has been kind enough to send us; and this university may yet do as much for the embryo Bryants and Greeleys, Weeds and Raymonds, and Ritchies and Hales, who are to transform American journalism into a profession, and emulate the laurels of these earlier leaders, with larger opportunities, on a wider stage, to more beneficent ends.

For journalism, chaotic, drifting, almost purposeless as it seems to-day, is but in the infancy of its development. It was almost twelve hundred

JOURNALISM AS A CAREER

years after Justinian before the lawyer fairly wrested rule from the soldier. It is barely a century since "Junius," in the height of his conflict with the lawyers, and especially with Lord Chief Justice Mansfield, amended the famous maxim of the great law commentator, and proclaimed, not Blackstone's trial by jury, but the liberty of the Press, "the Palladium of all the civil, political, and religious rights of an Englishman." From his triumph we may fairly date—for good or ill—the birth of genuine journalism. And how gigantic have been the strides of its progress!—from the day of Medleys, and Whig Examiners, and Flying Posts and Observators, Middlesex Journals, and North Britons, and Woodfall's Public Advertisers—all as nearly forgotten now as they seem worthless—down to the quarto sheet, crowded with yesterday's doings in all continents, and a record in some shape or other of the most striking thought of the whole world's thinkers, which you skimmed at the breakfast-table, gave your spare half-hours to throughout the day, and can hardly finish till to-night. Seeking mental repose after the excitements of the day's work, you take for it the hour before bedtime, and, with the final review of its columns, read yourself again into quiet nerves.

In the largest library in America, the accomplished librarian, himself an old editor, will show you long rows of the English papers of the last century, and a little way into the century before—dingy little quarto volumes, containing each a

JOURNALISM AS A CAREER

whole year's issue, and, in the whole, scarcely so much news as in this morning's "Herald." In Boston they will show you a number of "The Boston News-Letter," about the size of some of our play-house programmes, wherein is printed this proud editorial announcement:

"The undertaker of this News-Letter, in last January, gave information that, after fourteen years' experience, it was impossible, with half a sheet a week, to carry on all the publick occurrences of Europe; to make up which deficiency, and to render the news newer and more acceptable, he has since printed, every other week, a whole sheet, whereby that which seemed old in the former half-sheet becomes new now by the sheet; which is easy to be seen by any one who will be at the pains to trace back former years, and even this time twelve months. We were then thirteen months behind with the foreign news, and now we are less than five months; so that, by the sheet, we have retrieved about eight months since January last, and any one that has the News-Letter to January next (life permitted) will be accommodated with all the news from Europe needful to be known in these parts!"

It was in August, 1719, that the leading journal of Boston thus vaunted its enterprise. Let us be just, and admit that they have come, even in those parts, to think it needful to be accommodated with a little more news from Europe.

Nor was Boston singular. It has been common, though rather absurd, to speak of Benjamin Franklin as the father of American journalism. Well, here is his paper, "The Pennsylvania Gazette,"

JOURNALISM AS A CAREER

after he had been at work enlarging and improving it for twelve years. Its entire weekly printed surface is somewhat less than one-eighth of an ordinary daily issue of "The New York World," or of "The Press," now published in the city from which it was then issued; and of that, one-third is surrendered to advertisements of runaway negroes, runaway Irishmen, Muscovado sugar, St. Christopher's rum, and of a fresh import from Jamaica, and to be sold by Joseph Sims, at his house, where Mr. George McCall, deceased, lived, of a likely parcel of young negro boys and girls. But its news is only three months old from London, only eleven days old from Boston, and from New York only three; and it is all neatly and clearly presented. Yet when, at the bottom of the last page, we come to the announcement, "Philadelphia: Printed by B. Franklin, Postmaster, at the new Printing Office, near the Market," we are constrained to admit that even in the remotest country districts we have many a postmaster-editor now who has made material advances on the work of King George's guardian of the mails in Philadelphia.

Between this dingy scrap of paper, or any journal published before the time of "Junius," and first-class journals of to-day the difference is world-wide. But the advance will go on. Never were journalists of the better class prouder of their power, or more sensible of their deficiencies; never so thoroughly convinced of the greatness of their call-

JOURNALISM AS A CAREER

ing, or so anxious to make themselves equal to its ever expanding requirements. It is the fashion of the times to berate our depraved journalism. So it has been the fashion of all times, since journalism began, and every year with less reason. There are blackguards and blackmailers now in plenty, but they are fewer in proportion than they ever were before. There is intemperate denunciation now, and mere personal abuse, and the fiercest partisan intolerance; the newspapers are crude; the newspapers are shallow; the newspapers are coarse; are unjust; are impertinent; they meddle in private affairs; they distort the news to suit their own views; they wield their tremendous power to feed fat private grudges; they are too often indebted, as Sheridan said of an antagonist, to their memories for their jests, and to their imaginations for their facts; they crave sensations that they may turn a few extra, dirty pennies, and are reckless of truth, so they can print a story that will become the talk of the town;—charge all this, and more if you will, and with certain reservations I will grant it all. When Mr. Beecher had avowed his faith in the advantages of having women speak in church, and at the next prayer-meeting a prosy sister had taken up all the time to no purpose, and at the next had done the same, and at the next the same, and at the fourth had been, if possible, more tedious and oppressive than ever before, Mr. Beecher at last rose, with solemn air, as she took her seat, and observed, in argumentative tone, “Nevertheless,

JOURNALISM AS A CAREER

Brethren and Sisters, I believe in women speaking in prayer-meeting!" Charge what you will, prove what you will against the Press of New York to-day, *nevertheless* it is better in 1872 than it was in 1871; it was better in 1871 than it had ever been since Manhattan Island was discovered; and, please God, it will be better in 1873 and the years to come than it ever was before! The elder times were *not* better than these; and the young men, cultured, able, and conscientious, who are entering the ranks, are resolved that the future times shall be worthy of the larger opportunities that await them.

But is it worth while? We need not ignore the fact that a good many cultivated people openly, and a great many more in secret, hold the development of the newspaper press a nuisance. When good Dr. Rush made it a condition of his splendid bequest that the library he enriched should never admit those teachers of disjointed thinking, the newspapers, he gave formal utterance to this faith. Nor can we altogether deny the charge on which it rests. The daily journals have taught disjointed thinking. They have encouraged shallow thinking and inaccuracy, and a certain sponge-like universal receptiveness and forgetfulness. But you may say—in less degree—the same thing of pamphlets, of quarterly reviews, of cheap books, of any books at all. The monk who committed his Virgil to memory, then rubbed it out, that on the restored parchment he might inscribe the Institutes of Origen, knew the half-dozen great poets or philo-

JOURNALISM AS A CAREER

sophers or theologians of whose works the monastery library consisted, better than the average scholar of to-day knows anything. Shall we therefore go back to the days of parchment and wipe out our vast libraries, the accumulation of the centuries of disjointed thinking to which cheap printing has given rise? Most true is the wise saying of Thomas Fuller, that "Learning hath gained most by those books whereby the printers have lost;" and, refining upon this and upon Pope's well-worn warning against the danger of shallow draughts, some philosophers have sprung up—happily of less weight here than abroad, though even here numerous and influential—who pronounce, not merely cheap newspapers, but cheap knowledge of all kinds, the deplorable fountain of wild opinions, levelling dogmas, discontent, and danger to the country. But they may as well go further—as indeed some of them do. If the newspapers should, therefore, be discouraged, so also should be their twin brothers, the common schools. I do not deny the vicious intellectual habits to which they may give rise; I do not deny their shallowness, their inaccuracy, their false logic, their false taste. I only insist that whether you consider the common school or the free press, faulty as each may be, it is a necessary concomitant of our civilization and our government; that it has been steadily growing better, and that the best way to remedy the evils it works is to make it better still. And for the rest, when un-American Americans take up this sickly phi-

JOURNALISM AS A CAREER

losophy of alien birth, and in the hoarse tones of wornout European jeremiads, deplore cheap and universal information, and the disjointed thinking that results from it, let us, too, cross the ocean, and confront them with the wise and manly words of Lord Macaulay at the opening of the Edinburgh Philosophical Institution:

“I must confess that the danger which alarms these gentlemen never seemed to me very serious; and my reason is this: that I never could prevail on any person who pronounced superficial knowledge a curse, and profound knowledge a blessing, to tell me what was his standard of profundity. The argument proceeds upon the supposition that there is some line between profound and superficial knowledge, similar to that which separates truth from falsehood. I know of no such line.”

And so, with a contemptuous inquiry as to whether the gentlemen who were so uneasy about the spread of shallow information supposed that any of their profoundest pundits knew then so much in their own special departments as the smatterers of the next generation would know, his Lordship dismissed this cast-off folly of older lands, wherein some of our own aping scholars have made haste to clothe themselves. It need give no further discouragement to the sincere and able men who, drawn to journalism by the widening power it already wields and the sure promise of its near future, seek to make it better. These are the young men whose interest was so widely aroused by the inaccurate report that Yale had resolved upon the

JOURNALISM AS A CAREER

foundation of a school of journalism. They believe that the force which is wresting the sceptre from the profession of law should find form in a profession itself; and that with the larger influence it bears should come ampler preparation.

But they have no faith in the efficacy of the mere preparation. They know, though Mr. Emerson, when he wrote of "The London Times," was ignorant of it, that editors are born, not made. They enter their protest against the dictum, the other day, of one of the ablest of American critics, that any person of average ability, who chooses to turn his attention that way, can become a successful newspaper writer. They have seen that the curse of journalism is the tendency of all manner of fairly intelligent young men, who are at a loss for present means of earning next week's board bills, to fancy that the readiest way of paying them is to relieve some starving newspaper with their intellectual sustenance. The curse, indeed, spreads wider. All manner of men who seek recognition of any sort, anywhere, try to crowd into journalism, not as a profession, but as a stepping-stone. The men who are entering journalism now, and are to control it ten years hence, mean to make it desirable as something else than a place to start from; and they mean to make short work of the intruders who knock at its gates with only that purpose. In that droll episode in Dr. Johnson's life, wherein he makes his marvellous appearance as a man of business trying to settle his friend Thrale's estate,

JOURNALISM AS A CAREER

he signalizes himself as an advertiser. Wishing to offer a brewery at auction, he announced that it was not merely a beggarly lot of vats and kettles he proposed to sell, but the potentiality of growing rich, in a short time, beyond the dreams of avarice. That is precisely the idea with which an undistinguished and detestable mob of aspirants bear down on every leading newspaper office. They seek, not the good of journalism, not a profession wherein they can find honorable scope for their best faculties and the opening of a great career; but a beggarly lot of vats and kettles, of types and presses, which may give the potentiality of growing rich in a short time, beyond the dreams of avarice, and from which they may then get away as soon as possible.

Against all such the earnest and sincere young journalists, who constitute the hope of the profession, will persistently set their faces. One of the best results, indeed, of the proposed collegiate training would be the fostering of a professional feeling which would make such invasions disreputable. Physicians so despise the patent pill or bitters practitioner, that they make every purlieu of their profession too hot to hold him. We shall come in time to a similar *esprit de corps*. We shall not then see, as now, the great apostle of the Half-Baked heralded to all the Lyceum Committees of the country as the most brilliant of American journalists, when the gentleman's main use of journalism is as a means of advertising himself. There

JOURNALISM AS A CAREER

may be fewer zanies to gulp down the humbug of the literary adventurer, whose sole distinction is his devotion to the Gospel of Gush, or of the other whose main claim to consideration is the skill he has displayed in procuring celebration of himself, in letters to the country press, as the wonderful being who has organized half a dozen great newspapers, written in each pretty much everything worth reading, and proved himself the ablest writer that ever wielded an English goose-quill. When the profession of journalism is thoroughly recognized, charlatanry may still abound, but there will be summary discipline for the quacks.

At the outset of any plans for professional training, it is needful to recognize the imperative limitations of the work. No school of journalism, however elaborate or successful, is going to make editors; just as Mr. Packard's commercial college, with all the skill and fervor it commands, cannot make Stewarts and Claflins. Nor will any such school furnish the education which editors need. That is an acquisition to be begun in the best academies and colleges of the country, and to be sedulously pursued through all stages of the professional career. Neither will it undertake to teach shorthand writing. That is something not at all needful to an editor, unless he means to assume also the duties of a reporter, and, at any rate, is best learned by practice. No more will it teach typesetting. No man ought to be in authority about a newspaper office who does not understand at

JOURNALISM AS A CAREER

least the rudiments of typography; but for these the best school is the composing-room. And, to pass beyond these details, it will scarcely undertake to teach men to write, though, Heaven knows, that is sadly enough needed, as every busy editor, yet weary with the work of putting the Hon. Elijah Peony's card into presentable shape, or translating the angry reply of Congressman Simpkins into English, will testify. No man who has not served an apprenticeship to it can imagine the hopeless way in which many even of our best educated men play havoc with their parts of speech, when first turned loose in a printing-office; — while generally they add insult to injury by grumbling at the proof-reader—of all men—for not knowing what they wanted to write, when his business was to see to it that the types printed what they did write. The great need of newspapers, however, is not good writers, but good editors; and it is of their possible training in a School of Journalism, to be appended to the regular college course, as one of the additional features of university instruction, like the School of Mines, or Medicine, or Law, that I speak.

Every editor, recalling what he has sought so often, and so often in vain, in the selection of assistants, can readily suggest the outlines of the work such a special or post-graduate course might lay out for its students. Thus:

First. No man should think himself fit for journalism without some adequate knowledge of the

JOURNALISM AS A CAREER

history of political parties in this country. Does some one say I am naming as the first study the very thing all editors have at their fingers' ends? Many doubtless have, though they learned it as Fox said he learned oratory—at the expense of his audiences. But how many know it with the thoroughness and accuracy needful for the instant and intelligent discussions which every new phase of politics demands? Go no further back than to the revival of the one term argument. How many of the thousand able editors from Maine to California who began one morning, on receipt of a dispatch from New York, to tell what they thought of the principle, knew the history of Andrew Jackson's devotion to and desertion of it? Or of the attitude of the Whig party toward it? Or of the arguments for and against it in the time of the Constitutional Convention? A great many, I hope; but there was a plentiful lack of evidence of it, in the way some of them assailed what they were pleased to style a new and monstrous heresy. I am not saying it was not a heresy, or that it was not monstrous; but we should all have had more respect for the judgment that held it so, if found well-enough informed to avoid discoursing also of its novelty. Yet the imperative demand of modern journalism, and of the millions who support it, is, that if the question be sprung upon the sore-pressed writer at midnight, his paper shall next morning give it fair and intelligent discussion. It is not enough that you should know where to find things,

JOURNALISM AS A CAREER

which is about all colleges generally teach,—you must know things, and know them at once. Some one said of a distinguished editor, of such real ability that he can afford to laugh at the witty injustice: “He ought to belong to a Quarterly Review or an Annual,—a Weekly is too sudden for him.” For the political writer on a great daily, nothing must be too sudden,—no strategic combination of parties, no specious platform that repudiates accepted dogmas, no professed revival of ancient faith that is really the promulgation of new and revolutionary heresy. Yet how find, and how, when found, learn the facts? That is for the school that shall undertake such work to determine. Perhaps they might be partially presented in lectures. For the rest, they must be sought in innumerable statesmen’s manuals, and political text-books, and fragments of political biography, debates in Congress, abortive attempts at the history of the United States, newspaper files, volumes of election statistics, and all manner of other scattered material for a great unwritten work—the greatest and most splendid now awaiting that coming historian who shall add Macaulay’s brilliancy and Buckle’s philosophy to more than the industry of both.

Second. To this, no young man fitting himself for journalism should fail to add a comprehensive knowledge of the entire history of his own country, for which, fortunately, he will find the materials a little better digested and more accessible.

Third. With this should come an acquaintance

JOURNALISM AS A CAREER

with the general history of the world. The history of civilization, and of forms of government, of the trials that have overtaken each, and of the source from which its real perils came, of the development of diverse forms of civilization, and of the causes that have aided, retarded, overthrown each—the deductions of Guizot and De Tocqueville and Buckle—the recitals of Motley, Grote, Gibbon, Froude, Kinglake—whatever tells how governments have borne the stress of unexpected peril, and men have prospered, suffered, advanced, or lost ground in this or that condition of rule, will furnish invaluable guidance for any intelligent discussion of to-day's problems of public affairs.

Fourth. It will not, I trust, startle too much the faith of the average American that anybody can edit a newspaper, to add, as another indispensable acquirement, a fair general knowledge of the fundamental principles of common, constitutional, and international law. Nothing, perhaps, could add to the wisdom with which our Press has already discussed, say the Alabama treaty, or the international obligations involved in the French arms question, or the problems of our reconstruction policy; but that those who come after us may not fall below the high standard thus set up, the more frequent mastery of Blackstone, and Story, and Wheaton, and similar convenient books of ready reference in editorial offices, may prove an advantage.

Fifth. There is less occasion, perhaps, to insist on the need of political economy, since of late there

JOURNALISM AS A CAREER

has been a singular revival of interest in such topics. But the subject is a large one, and he who has supplanted Adam Smith and Bentham and Malthus with John Stuart Mill, and Say, and Bastiat, has mastered Matthew Carey and Henry C. Carey, Greeley and Wayland and Bowen, will still find the literature of the question expanding into a thousand ramifications, and leading to kindred studies as complex and imperative. To the newspaper reader, questions of banking and currency, of the growth and management of national debts, of the present insane recklessness of municipal indebtedness, of taxation, of insurance, and the like, perpetually present themselves; and he looks to the editor for an elucidation of each that shall be popular in form, yet fairly abreast of the latest and best thought of the men who have made it the study of their lives.

Sixth. From the weary splash of watery argumentation on these topics that carries us nowhere, from the flabbiness of reasoning, and incoherence of premise with conclusion, and general inconsequence, who shall deliver us? Might not a sixth subject of the most careful study in a course of training for journalistic work be fitly found in some such essays on exact reasoning as should make our popular writing conform a little to the severe processes of logic?

Seventh. Even yet the modern languages are not so firmly established in our common courses of collegiate education as to make it reasonably

JOURNALISM AS A CAREER

certain that the man of education, approaching journalism without special preparation, will be sure to have this essential part of a journalist's equipment. Year by year these languages grow more nearly indispensable. The New York office without gentlemen on its staff reading at least French, German, and Spanish, would be preposterous; and hereafter the editor who enters his profession without a working knowledge of at least two of them must expect to find himself perpetually crippled. What reader of taste would not be glad if there were less occasion to add and dwell upon the necessity of some knowledge of English? Richard Grant White made magazine readers merry for months, and many journalists angry for a much longer time, over his irreverent descriptions of "Newspaper English." Yet the fact remains that of the average manuscripts received in almost any of our New York dailies, from professional or semi-professional writers, not more than one-half can be safely put in type without previous careful revision for mere errors in grammar. To use the right words and only enough of them, to say what is meant so simply and directly that the sentence goes like a bullet straight to its mark, and, having said it, to stop,—that, alas! is the achievement of scarcely one in three-score. To secure some approximation to it is the daily toil and tribulation of every sore-tried office editor; the writer who fairly reaches it has already made good his place beside the foremost.

JOURNALISM AS A CAREER

Eighth. The time is coming in our journalism when books will be more generally reviewed, not noticed; when paintings will be criticised and estimated, not puffed or damned; when we shall learn from our newspapers more of how the score of the opera was rendered and its feeling interpreted, with perhaps less about the looks of the prima donna or the clothes of the chorus; when the new actor shall be judged by his worthy interpretation of high work, rather than praised because his friends clamor for it. In all these directions, as it seems to me, there has been immense progress in the last decade. Book publishers have about quit expecting the review of a book in a leading journal to bear proportion to the length of the advertisement. Artists comprehend that an invitation to a studio reception is not necessarily followed by an eulogium of all the works now on their easels, all the others they have painted and sold, and all the others still they mean to paint and want to sell. I know something of the state of theatrical criticism in New York; and I do not know the reputable critic on a reputable journal whom any actor or manager would dare approach with a mercenary proposition. When the field is thus fairly open for legitimate criticism, it is time that the principles of criticism were more thoroughly studied.

And here this too prolix enumeration must end. I have said nothing of that comprehensive study of English Literature which every man of letters begins in his teens and closes only with his life;

JOURNALISM AS A CAREER

or of the wider acquaintance with the progress of modern scientific and metaphysical thought which our advancing journalism demands. Not to know Darwin and McCosh, Herbert Spencer and Huxley, and "Ecce Homo," is as bad now as it was, some years ago, to be ignorant of the Nueces or Rio Grande boundary, or, a little longer since, to know nothing of the national bank, and the removal of the deposits. In effect, the modern journalist, with what skill and power he may, must well-nigh adopt Bacon's resolve, and take all knowledge to be his province. No separate school is likely now, or soon, to be founded for such a course. But more than one college or university beside that of the city of New York has been considering whether such studies—many of them already taught in some form or other—might not be appropriately combined into a special department, or a post-graduate course, which would at least command as large attendance as many of those now enjoying the support of our best institutions and the services of our ripest scholars.

It will be objected that all this presupposes journalism for the highly educated few—not for the masses. But who has not learned that the masses are the acutest and most exacting critics? Even your prima donna courtesies indeed to the proscenium boxes and the dress circle, but sings to the top tier. "If I have made any success, whether as author or editor," said the stone mason of Cromarty, the most fascinating scientific author of his

JOURNALISM AS A CAREER

day, and the most successful editor in his country for the last half century, "it has been by constantly writing up to my audience—never writing down to them." The hard-working mechanic, who looks a second time at the four pennies which would almost pay his fare down town before spending them for the morning paper, is apt to want his four cents' worth, and very likely to know when he has got it. He may not be able to analyze his opinions, but he knows, my friend of the quill, when your article was written because you had something to say, and when because you wanted to furnish some copy; when you understand your subject, and when, in default of exact knowledge, you are substituting rant for reason. He may be carried away now and again by a flaming sensation; but, in the long run, he finds out the deception, and does n't thank you for it. He inclines more and more to buy the papers that deceive him the least, and put him off the fewest times with their second-best work. He does n't want fine writing, but he wants the finest writing, that is the writing which nobody notices, because it is the mere medium for fine thinking. There is sometimes, especially among unlettered and unsuccessful newspaper conductors, a fear of getting beyond their audiences. The trouble is, their audiences are constantly getting beyond them. We have noted the advance in journalism since Franklin's "Gazette" and "The Boston News-Letter." But it has been as marked in ability as in mere bulk of news. Every decade

JOURNALISM AS A CAREER

shows it, none perhaps more than the last. We talk of the good old times in New York journalism, and reverently call the roll of the working worthies of years ago—dead or famous now. But the work they have left is not so varied, so complete, so thorough as the work of to-day. Take down the files at the Astor or Mercantile Library, and look for yourselves. Yet as the grade of New York journalism has advanced, its influence has widened, its circulation has quadrupled over and over, and its pecuniary standing has been revolutionized. That is what comes of writing up to your audience, and it is what will always come of it.

Less preparation for journalism than has just been suggested has of course once and again made the largest success. I do not depreciate self-made journalists. Julius Caesar knew nothing of Jomini, yet who thinks that a reason why the student of war should be told that the study of Jomini is idle? George Stephenson was the son of a fireman in a colliery, and at the age of eighteen was unable to read or write; but when Wall Street is considering what it shall pay for Union Pacific, or whether it shall touch Northern Pacific, it does not search among the ignorant lads in a colliery for the railway engineers whose judgment is to determine the investments. Morse was a painter of indifferent portraits; but when the Atlantic cable is laid, the most skilful and scientific electricians are sought. Journalism in America owes to three or four men, who have risen from the printer's case, almost as

JOURNALISM AS A CAREER

much as telegraphy to Morse, or railways to Stephenson,—in some of its greater relations they have well-nigh discovered it; but its main advances, like advances everywhere else, are won by the best preparation and the most honest work.

If there has been less of these, thus far, in our Press, than men of thought and culture would have wished, the profession has not been singular. One of the most curious chapters in De Tocqueville's great work on our institutions is that in which he theorizes on the fact that in all classes and callings in the United States are to be found so many ambitious men and so little lofty ambition. As the pervasive, continuous, and ever-increasing influence of the Press extends, as preparation for it becomes more general, as a sense of the responsibilities its power imposes becomes deeper, as its ranks fill with men better and better equipped for its work, we may see, there at least, not perhaps fewer of the petty ambitions the philosophic Frenchman noted, but more of the lofty and honorable ambition, whose absence everywhere he deplored. It will be an ambition to make journalism a field for the ablest, to make its intelligence and its justice commensurate with its power, to make it a profession for gentlemen to pursue, moralists to rejoice in, and the Commonwealth to hold as a sure bulwark and high honor.

There are needed reforms in the profession, which, under such influences, we may hope the sooner to attain. First among these I reckon an

JOURNALISM AS A CAREER

increasing sense of responsibility for the printed word—thrown heedlessly from the weary pen at midnight, but borne with the daybreak to the attention and confidence of fifty thousand homes, to mend or mar some man's honest name. With this will come an increasing sense of the wrong every editor does the whole profession, who permits his press to become the vehicle either for actual slander, or for that reckless trifling with character and that invasion of personal concerns which make so marked a feature of many of our most successful newspapers. I look, indeed, for an absolute revolution in the attitude of the whole respectable Press toward the laws against slander and libel. It has been common to regard these as laws for the persecution of the Press, and such, a hundred years ago, they certainly were. But to-day they ought to be among the most valuable agencies for its protection. I, for one, rejoice in the institution of every libel suit for which there is the color of justification; and count every fair conviction for libel a gain to the cause of decent journalism. I do not forget that the law of libel once allowed one of Richard Hildreth's atrocious judges to sentence the editor of "The Observer" to those public floggings through the towns of western England which Pope embalmed for infamy in the couplet:

"Earless on high stood unabashed Defoe,
And Tutchin, flagrant from the scourge below."

I do not forget the series of legal persecutions

JOURNALISM AS A CAREER

and follies that made “Junius” a power as mysterious and awful as fate, took John Wilkes from prison to make him Chamberlain of London, and soiled ineffaceably the ermine of Mansfield. But here and now we suffer from no such dangers. Instead, we lose standing and influence because our liberty runs into license. Were every clear slander, whereof correction on due application and proof has been refused, remorselessly prosecuted to conviction and inexorable punishment, we should have reason to canonize alike prosecutor and judge. No higher service can be rendered journalism to-day than by making it responsible for what it says, and giving the humblest citizen whom its gigantic power may purposely wrong, easy and cheap justice. Make libel suits easy; make them cheap and speedy; let them lie only in cases where the publication was palpably malicious, or fair and prompt correction was, on due application and proof, refused; then sustain them by a sentiment in the profession which will, in turn, soon create a sentiment in the community—and you have done more to make our Press cautious, and truthful, and just, than all the oppressive libel laws of a century ago ever did to harm it. My own opinion is that the Press of New York, during some months past, would have been vastly helped by a libel suit a day. If the journal with which I am myself connected came in for its share of them, so much the better. It would be a deserved discipline, if we have done any man a wrong and refused correction. It would

JOURNALISM AS A CAREER

make easier the business of enforcing caution and fair dealing on the hundred assistants whose several judgments must be more or less trusted in making up every issue. It would give to every word we did utter an additional weight, and it would deprive the bad men we expose of their present ready answer, "Oh, that does n't amount to anything; the newspapers abuse everybody." It is an ill day for journalism when people do not care what the newspapers say against them. It is an ill day for the country when people do care and cannot get their wrongs redressed. It will be better for both when justice is cheap and journalism is just.

Another reform, which we may fairly expect, will be shown in a better comprehension of the scope of the news, which is the life-blood of the paper. It is possible to fill up the largest metropolitan sheet with a record of actual news which shall be simply revolting; yet you shall go over it, line by line, and put your finger on no paragraph to which you can fairly object as not a part of the news of the day. Led by its hand, you stroll the world around, and gather every vice on Christian ground. It is possible, again, to fill the same sheet with another record of actual news, which shall be simply respectable and unreadable; yet you shall go over it, line by line, and put your finger on no paragraph which does not convey genuine information about the actual events of the day. Once again, it is possible to fill the same sheet

JOURNALISM AS A CAREER

with a record so compounded of that which most freshly and widely interests your average constituency, that you shall have neglected no pressing topic of the times; shall have fairly given your readers as minute a glance as their occupations will permit, at the salient features of the world's progress for the day; and yet shall have cast the lights in your picture on what a gentleman wants to see, and the shades on what he only sees because he must. Now the vicious newspaper pays, and the only way to make the other kind stand the competition is by making it equally interesting. Many a daily journal is loaded down with such feculence that it should only be handled in your homes with a pair of tongs, not because its proprietor really prefers to minister to men's baser instead of their better wants, but because he has found the one way of making money, and has n't yet hit on the other. It is easy to fill his columns with prurient stories of crime from police courts; it is harder to find men who can make the details of politics, the wonders of our material development, the progress of thought, as readily and certainly interesting. But we shall get larger ideas of news. We shall come to regard it as something other than a daily chapter of accidents and crimes; more even than a detail of public meetings, a history of legislation and the courts, a record of political intrigue at home and diplomatic complication abroad. We shall come to embrace in it far more generally and systematically every new and sig-

JOURNALISM AS A CAREER

nificant fact affecting the social, political, intellectual, or moral movements of the world, and to comprehend that this world is composed of two sexes, the one demanding a recognition of its tastes and wants as well as the other. We shall learn to winnow the vast mass of facts which the mails over all continents and the wires under all seas are perpetually bearing to the newspaper doors. We shall learn to reject the most of these as worthless or inconsequent; to adjust the perspective of the rest more in accordance with their intrinsic importance, not their fuss; to divine what the public want, and what they will want when they come to know about it; and to give the whole with a completeness, a spirit, a *verve*, which shall make this chronicle of the times as attractive as its themes are absorbing.

With these larger capacities, we may hope, too, for some of the sanctions of a profession. The mere soldier, who ostentatiously carries his sword to the side of the highest bidder, is despised. Not all the genius, not all the excuses of Jomini could save even his career from blight. Shall we accord greater privileges to intellectual free lances? There was a vealy period in our journalistic development, when young men with a flavor of Byron and bad beer about them, prated of fair Bohemia, and held it noble to believe nothing, but to write like a believer for anything that would pay. But the age of fair Bohemia is gone, and the seedy, disreputable Bohemian lags superfluous on the

JOURNALISM AS A CAREER

stage. Lawyers may still, in the worst spirit of Lord Brougham's bad maxim, sell faith and honor as well as intellect to their clients if they will, but it is already reckoned a disgrace that a writer should enforce upon the public a faith he is himself known to despise. "My friend never writes what he does not conscientiously believe," said one distinguished western journalist of another; "but of all men living he has the greatest facility of belief." The profession grows less fond of these facile beliefs. The noisome weed of Bohemianism is well-nigh uprooted, and when it is, the Press may better command, as it will better deserve, the services of gentlemen and men of letters.

"Shall we ever see a Press that we can always trust to tell the whole truth, without reference to business considerations?" Of course not; and the question is perpetually asked, as a conclusive demonstration of the worthlessness of newspapers, by men who ought to know better. Do you know any business man who tells the whole truth in his operations, irrespective of business considerations?—any lawyer, any doctor, any statesman? Till that always promising, never performing race of long-delayed patriots appear, who are to publish great newspapers for the mere advancement of truth, it is probable that the poor papers we have will still be issued by the mercenary owners with some sordid purpose of making money by them. But the great newspapers are those which look for news, not advertisements. With the news comes circula-

JOURNALISM AS A CAREER

tion, and when circulation demands, the advertisements seek the paper, not the paper the advertisements. Make your newspaper so good, so full of news, so truthful, so able, that people must take it; make its circulation so great that advertisers will plead for the privilege of getting into it—those seem to me the two great business commandments of our better journalism. When at last we get our feet planted on this solid ground, no newspaper can afford to suppress or soften the truth in any business interest. “The London Times” threw away thirty thousand dollars a week in advertisements in the railway mania of 1845. It made money by the loss. It could not have afforded not to throw the money away, for it thereby vindicated its spirit of honest dealing with its readers, in the eyes of all Europe; and its readers were of infinitely more consequence to it than its advertisers. This is precisely the view that your *small* business man would never take; he would see nothing but the twenty thousand dollars a week that could be had as easily as not by only keeping quiet in the editorial columns; but great newspapers are neither built up nor maintained by small business men. More and more the trade of selling advertisements is getting reduced to as plain a basis as the trade of selling flour or potatoes, where the money paid over the counter represents the exact selling price of the article bought, and there is no dream of further obligation on either side. By and by we shall see all reputable journals stop depreciating their own

JOURNALISM AS A CAREER

wares by admitting that it is necessary to call attention to an advertisement in the reading columns, to get it seen; treat as preposterous the request that there shall be some notice of theatre or lecture, "just to accompany the advertisement, you know;" take as an insult the suggestion that if an editorial could be made speaking well of the capabilities of a region and its need of a railroad, there would be a heavy advertisement of railroad bonds; utterly refuse, on whatever specious plea of public as well as private interest, to suffer one line to appear as reading-matter which the editor did not select because he thought it of more interest than any other matter it might displace, and the paper did not publish without a penny of pay. Some of these reforms, in the case of any but the strongest journals, will come slowly, for they amount to revolution; but come they will—not because publishers will be more disinterested than now, but because, looking to the rights of readers, their paramount importance to the newspaper they support and the imperative need of keeping faith with them, publishers will see such reform to be sound business policy, and any other course to be business quackery.

I have left myself no time to speak of some of the problems of journalism that may soon come up for settlement.

Whether, as the fields over which our enterprise gleans keep ever expanding, we shall enlarge our newspapers or condense our news; or, in other

JOURNALISM AS A CAREER

words, whether people want their daily paper to furnish them more matter, in more frequent triple sheets, or regular twelve-page issues, or whether they do not find it already taking up too much time, and ask instead that it be judiciously edited to smaller compass.

Whether the great metropolitan newspapers are or are not in danger, in their eager pursuit and elaborate presentment of important city news, of impairing their value as the accredited records of the larger news of the world.

Whether, as in the differentiation of journalism class papers spring up, the great dailies shall keep up the present competition, say in shipping news with "The Journal of Commerce," in markets with the pure commercial papers, in stock reports with the technical journals of the street; and shall extend their competition into yet other fields, as in courts with the law reports and the official records, in railways and inventions with the engineering journals, in insurance with the insurance journals, or whether technical details shall be abandoned almost entirely to the class papers, and only what is likely to be of general interest to the largest number retained.

Whether the further development of our journalism is to tend toward the French or English pattern, toward reckless epigram and affairs of society almost to the overshadowing and neglect of the news, or toward stately essay writing and dullish letters.

JOURNALISM AS A CAREER

Whether the French *feuilleton* can ever be engrafted on American journals.

Whether we might therewith secure a more convenient shape for our papers; as, for example, by taking Henry Watterson's suggestive idea of an evening daily of the shape of "The Saturday Review" or "The Nation," with its last six or eight pages surrendered to advertisements set without display, and this space made the most valuable and attractive on the paper by keeping a serial story from the pen of the best novelist money can command running on the lower half of each advertising page continuously.

Whether the new journalism will follow public opinion or make it.

Whether a great paper can ever afford for any considerable length of time to set itself deliberately athwart what it knows to be the overwhelming popular desire.

What *are* the inherent limitations of this gigantic power?

These, and many kindred topics, may still be classed among the unsolved problems of journalism. On the solutions which the young men of the profession give to some of them will largely rest its future.

But above all these is the larger question, whether they will not make an end of personal and official journalism. Half the force of many a great paper is now consumed in warding off attacks upon its editor, or making attacks upon his antagonist,

JOURNALISM AS A CAREER

which nowise concern the justice or acceptability of the principles it advances. The public is invited to a discussion of the political crisis, and is regaled with an onslaught upon Editor Smith, because he once supported a custom-house candidate, though he now has the unblushing mendacity to stand on a Tammany Republican platform; is asked to consider the grave situation at the South, and is met by a denunciation of Editor Jenkins, because his partner made money by running cotton through the blockade, or his brother-in-law had a wife's nephew in the rebel army. This is not entertaining to the reader, and is not profitable to the editor. No man is so good as his preaching, and sound discussion of public affairs will always get a fairer hearing when no man's personality colors or compromises it. It has been a long time since the editors of our best papers paraded their names at the head of the columns; if now they could keep their existence absolutely out of sight, their papers would carry double weight for every judicious article, or every sagacious stroke of policy. With our Nestors of the Press, scarred in half a century of its fights and crowned with many a grateful honor, this is not possible. But with the younger generation it is; and in their hands American journalism will reach its most commanding influence when it most nearly conceals its journalists. When Sir Robert Peel retired from office, and wished to thank the editor of "The Times" for the powerful support it had given his government, he could

JOURNALISM AS A CAREER

not learn the editor's name. The name is common in men's mouths now, and the power has waned. In Paris they get away as far as possible from the habit of their sad island neighbors, and every writer signs his leading article. But the average life of a Paris newspaper is under a year, and a steady journalistic influence in France seems an impossibility. They have plenty of editorial office-holders, too; but the newspapers are worthless.

That charming book, Arthur Help's "Thoughts upon Government," contains some words that deserve the profoundest attention of any young man proposing to himself a future in newspapers. "If any part of the Press," he says, "enters into close alliance with any great political party, that part of the Press loses much of its influence; for the public desires the Press to represent its views and wishes, and does not delight in manifest advocacy on behalf of political parties. Then comes the question, what should be the relations between the Press and the Government. Before all things, these relations should not be slavish on either side. They should, if possible, be friendly, and, at any rate, should be just."

There at last we have it! Independent journalism!—that is the watchword of the future in the profession. An end of concealments because the truth would hurt the party; an end of one-sided expositions, because damaging things must only be allowed against our antagonists; an end of assaults that are not believed fully just, but must be made

JOURNALISM AS A CAREER

because the exigency of party warfare demands them; an end of slanders that are known to be slanders, but must not be exploded because it would hurt the party; an end of hesitation to print the news in a newspaper because it may hurt the party; an end of doctoring the reports of public opinion in South Carolina and Alaska because the honest story of the feeling there might hurt the party; an end of all half-truths and hesitated lies; an end of public contempt for the voice that barks only approval to Sir Oracle, and through all the busy marts of trade and amusement and learning and religion keeps ever barking only this:

“I am His Highness’s dog at Kew :

Pray, tell me, Sir, whose dog are you ;”

an end, as Emerson has taught us the happy phrase, at once of official and officinal journalism—that is the boon which to every perplexed conscientious member of the profession a new and beneficent Declaration of Independence affords. Under it journalism expands in a balanced and unfettered development; ceases to be one-sided in its views, and to be distrusted, even in its facts; becomes the master, not the tool, of party; tells the whole truth; commands the general confidence; ceases to be the advocate, rises to be the judge. To that passionless ether we may not from these partisan struggles soon ascend; but if not the near, it is at least the certain future of successful and honored journalism.

AN EDITOR'S REFLECTIONS

II

THE PRACTICAL ISSUES IN
A NEWSPAPER OFFICE

THE PRACTICAL ISSUES IN A NEWSPAPER OFFICE

EVERY now and then some Magnus Apollo of an earlier day returns to our profession. We all give him most respectful salutation; felicitate ourselves on the great gain we shall have from his experience, judgment, skill; and wait. Regularly, decisively, and at the outset, he fails. The reason of this monotonous disappointment has come to be recognized. The business of making a newspaper is in a state of constant growth and change. You might almost say that it is revolutionized once every ten years. The veteran returns to find the old methods useless, the old weapons out of date, the old plans of action out of relation to the present arrangement of the forces. Nor is this to be thought in the least unnatural. Abolish the old forms of procedure; adopt an entirely new code, as our Albany pests are perpetually proposing; and Charles O'Connor, returning to the profession of which he was so long an ornament and glory, and attempting his own office business, might break down in a police court, under the onset of a Tombs shyster.

No doubt there is progress in the other professions, too; at least we helpless victims of the lawyer and the doctor hope so. But these absolute revolutions have, in this century, been the distinctive mark of our own. The cylinder press made one. Before that the circulation of a daily news-

THE PRACTICAL ISSUES

paper was imperatively limited by the number of pulls one pair of arms could give a Washington press within the hour or two which shut in the life, for publication purposes, of any day's news. Four hundred was large, a thousand enormous, beyond fifteen hundred an impossibility. The railroads made another revolution. They doubled, trebled, quadrupled the area of circulation. The fast printing-press made another. It is not too much to say that one man, still going about the streets of New York, modest, genial, busy on new notions, gave a new birth to the journalism not merely of his own country but of the world. When Richard M. Hoe showed how types could be placed on a revolving cylinder instead of a flat bed, he did as much for the profession that now rules the world as the inventor of gunpowder did for the one that ruled it last. From that moment came the possibility of addressing millions, at the instant of their readiest attention, from a single desk, within a single hour, on the events of the hour.

And now came another revolution as startling as any. The conduct of newspapers ceased to be the work of journeymen printers, of propagandists, needy politicians, starveling lawyers, or adventurers. Its new developments compelled the use of large capital, and thus the modern metropolitan daily journal became a great business enterprise, as legitimate as a railroad or a line of steamships, and as rigidly demanding the best business management. Thus stimulated, its growth again outran

IN A NEWSPAPER OFFICE

its facilities. No printing-press ever devised could print in the required time as many newspapers as there were eager buyers. The discovery of a way to stereotype the whole paper in half an hour, and thus put as many presses as you needed at work on the same paper at the same time, solved that difficulty, and the business underwent another change amounting to revolution. Then came the enormous extension of telegraph lines and ocean cables. The old-fashioned letter-writer was almost abolished. The Washington correspondence came by telegraph. The account of a great battle fought yesterday east of Paris was read in detail this morning in New York. The journalist, at one leap, took the whole world for his province every morning.

With each of these revolutions the sphere of the daily newspaper has broadened. It has commanded wider and more varied ability. It has been able to draft talent from any quarter, to command the best business sagacity, unlimited capital, the widest enterprise. As the result of all this we see—

Daily papers that sell you every morning, for three or four pennies, matter equalling the contents of a thick book, often procured at a cost tenfold, a hundredfold what the book's contents cost;

Papers that add to this mass of information as many, sometimes twice or three times as many, pages of advertisements, on every conceivable subject, classified and indexed;

Papers that give you yesterday's news, from

THE PRACTICAL ISSUES

every quarter of the habitable globe, and on every conceivable subject,—the downfall of an empire, the conclusions of a European conference, the result of a horse-race, the verdict of a Presbytery, the secret proceedings of a hermetically sealed caucus, the robbing of Patrick O'Donovan's till, the game of baseball some college boys have played, what Edison thinks he is going to discover, what the Leadville enthusiasts say they have discovered, and a veto message from the President—an infinite variety of things worthy and worthless;

And, finally, daily papers that give you all this with such multiplicity of detail, and in such masses that, unless from morn till dewy eve you give your whole time to it, you cannot read them through.

To that complexion have these successive and rapid revolutions in journalism brought us. What is to be the next great change? Will the growth in the size of our papers continue, so as to make room for increasing advertisements and yet wider and fuller news? Or shall we presently find the greatest newspapers too big already and too crowded with news to admit any advertisements at all? Shall we have cheaper papers? Shall we increase the quantity or the variety of news we print in anything like the ratio of the last decade?

Certainly there must be great changes in the matter of advertising. I doubt if, in most cases, the volume is to be much increased, and in some it is pretty sure to be diminished. The business of issuing sup-

IN A NEWSPAPER OFFICE

plemental sheets to carry off the surplus of advertising is self-limited, and in some cases it is already carried on at a loss. You issue a paper of a certain grade at, let us say, four cents, and you so adjust your scale of expenditure that your receipts on the circulation of so many copies will about balance it, leaving the advertisements to furnish the profit. But you fill the paper with news, and crowd these advertisements into an extra sheet. Here now enters another element in your problem. Your advertisements can no longer be counted as profit, because out of them must first be paid the cost for the extra paper on which they are printed. Your circulation is necessarily large, or you could not depend on it to pay the expenses of procuring the news and making the paper. But the larger it is, the larger becomes the drain for the extra paper on which you now print your advertisements. With a circulation of fifty thousand, the cost of this paper might be taken from the gross receipts for advertising and still leave you a handsome margin for profits. Double the circulation, and you have doubled the cost of your extra paper for printing the same number of advertisements; yet you sell the two sheets at the same four cents for which you once sold the one. This may leave the margin on the wrong side.

A few actual figures may make it plainer. You undertake to furnish an eight-page newspaper for four cents. As the circulation increases, and the business management learns to take advantage of

THE PRACTICAL ISSUES

it, the advertisements flow in and crowd out the news. Your readers would resent this, and your rivals would have you at a disadvantage. Either you must raise the price of the advertising so as to get the same revenue from a smaller amount of it, and exclude the rest, or you must carry it off in an extra sheet for which you will receive no extra pay, and the entire cost of which must be deducted from the profit you rightfully expect on your advertisements. With the present system of fast printing-presses, you can make this sheet one-quarter, one-half, or the whole size of the regular issue, but one of these three it must be. Suppose you content yourself with a supplement one-fourth the size of the regular issue. This gives you two pages, and, at a low but safe estimate, one thousand paying lines of advertising to the page. Now, say you print and give away with the regular issue one hundred thousand of this supplemental sheet. Your white paper for it costs you \$250. Your agate composition for it costs you \$50 more. You have made an outlay of \$300 in order to print two thousand lines of advertising. How much must you get for that advertising to repay you the actual outlay? A moment's figuring brings you the approximate price of fifteen cents per line. Recollect, this involves no profit. It does not even meet the expenses, for I have counted the bare cost of the white paper, the composition, and the proof-reading. There are a thousand and one incidentals, the receiving of the advertisements, the trans-

IN A NEWSPAPER OFFICE

mission, collections, waste paper, extra postage, extra press-work, extra cost in mailing, etc. Does it take much study to show that these advertisements must bring a good price, or the publication of them must be continued for purely philanthropic purposes, and at a loss? Yet there are newspapers which print them for nothing, and there are others, of great circulation, too, which print many of them at five cents a line. Years ago the younger Bennett said to me, "The growth of this advertising troubles me. Whole columns of it I print now at a loss, and I would gladly throw part of it out, if it were not that some of you fellows would pick it up."

Of course, one point must not be lost sight of. There is a certain element of news in some of this advertising, and that newspaper is more welcome to some of its readers which has a moderate amount and variety of it. But one question must be settled before deciding to publish it at a loss or to publish it for nothing. Is this *the most* interesting news with which this space can be filled? Will this cause more readers to buy the paper than anything else we could get to put in its place?

The upshot of it all seems to be that, in the long run, cheap advertising must seek cheap mediums. The paper of the largest circulation cannot afford to cultivate it. The advertisers most likely to afford appearing in the great newspapers of the future will be those appealing to large classes, and able, therefore, to pay for the widest publicity. The chambermaid that wants a place at \$15 a month

THE PRACTICAL ISSUES

cannot long afford to ask one hundred thousand readers for it. She can better go to an employment agency. The man who has a horse to sell will not talk to one hundred thousand readers about its points; he will go to a sales-stable. The man who wants a cook will not advertise for her any more than he will for his winter's supply of coal.

In London, there is a curious paper, as big as "The London Times," devoted solely to the publication of cheap advertisements about individual wants, matters of sale, or barter. One man has a shotgun and wants to trade it for Blackstone's "Commentaries." Another has a guitar and would like to get for it a set of shirt studs; a third wants to trade a ring for old clothes. A myriad of petty things make their appearance here at an insignificant cost, but the paper is published solely as an adjunct to a great sales and barter bureau. Its circulation is trifling, the cost of manufacture little beyond the bare cost of composition, and the profits are derived from the commissions on the sales and trades which the bureau cultivates. This is an entirely legitimate business and a convenient one; but it is not the business of journalism. No great newspaper could afford to bother with it itself; far less could it afford to bother its readers with it. They already complain of being forced to grope through too many pages to find what they want. The experiment of giving them still more would result only in driving them to the smaller and handier papers.

IN A NEWSPAPER OFFICE

If, then, the greatest newspapers of the future will not be filled with masses of small and comparatively cheap advertising, as to a considerable extent they are now, will they go to the other extreme? The daring idea has sometimes been advanced that the coming newspaper would publish no advertisements at all. It is not impossible, though just now quite improbable. The old theory of selling the paper to the purchaser for the bare cost of the white sheet on which it is printed, leaving the advertisements to pay the expenses of making it a newspaper, has been pretty well exploded. The colossal expenses of the modern daily are no longer risked upon an income so uncertain, and at the best so fluctuating. It happens, too, by a curious law which is often found working in business affairs, that the less you need advertisements, the more likely you are to get them — while the more you depend upon them as an absolute necessity for the continuance of your publication, the less likely they are to come.

It seems chimerical to expect printing paper to fall to a still lower price, and at its present price and with their present circulations none of the great newspapers could exclude advertisements. There is no sufficient reason to believe that the insertion of attractive news and miscellany in the place the advertisements now occupy would draw in enough more readers to make the profit on the increased circulation compensate for the loss on the advertising. But, preposterous as it now seems,

THE PRACTICAL ISSUES

I look for the day when printing paper will sell far below its present price; and I rest this faith on the simple proposition that a manufactured article, the process of manufacturing which is easy and comparatively cheap, cannot long continue to be sold at six cents per pound, when the bulk of the raw material entering into it grows in the forest, on every hillside, and can be bought at two dollars a cord. The disproportion between the cost of the raw material and the cost of the manufactured article is too great to be permanently maintained. It is true enough that paper-makers have only the narrowest margin of profit now; but better processes for making wood-pulp and improved machinery for converting it into paper must surely come. So simple a manufacture will not continue forever adding a thousand per cent to the cost of the raw material it uses. When the happy day of really cheap paper comes, the greatest newspapers may fairly consider the problem of excluding everything from their columns but that which is of universal rather than of partially private and partially public interest.

Are we likely soon to have cheaper newspapers? You have all been confronted, of late years, by an occasional growl like this: "Everybody has to take lower prices nowadays. Wages are down, the cost of living is down, everything else has come down to what it was before the war; why don't you put down the price of your paper?" But the news-

IN A NEWSPAPER OFFICE

papers have not come down to the prices before the war, and I make bold to say that the sagacious ones will not. "The Philadelphia Ledger" before the war was sold at one cent. I venture to predict that if it is ever again sold at that price, it will be many years hence. The New York quarto dailies used to be furnished at two cents. Who thinks of seeing papers like those of to-day sold at two cents again? A short answer to the inquiring growler may be really given: "We will come down to ante-war prices whenever you are ready to accept an ante-war newspaper."

What that was, few really remember. Looking over the files of the journal with which I am most familiar, I have found that on the busiest days, and under the crowning excitements that preceded the Rebellion, it was in the habit of receiving an average of between one and two columns of news by telegraph from all quarters, exclusive only of the reports of congressional proceedings. News from Europe all came by steamer. News from all the considerable cities of our own continent came mainly by post when it came at all. Clippings from the exchanges were the chief source of supply. Even a great national nominating Convention called for only something like two columns of telegraphing, and this was so spread out by profuse paragraphs and other cheap typographical tricks as to occupy double the space we should give it now. To-day our foreign news comes exclusively by cable; our domestic news,

THE PRACTICAL ISSUES

too, comes exclusively by telegraph. A news-letter from Chicago or St. Louis is almost unheard of, for the simple reason that the news has been told by telegraph before the letter could start. For the two columns of dispatches from all quarters in 1859, we now have page after page printed, and sometimes as much more remorselessly thrown into the waste basket—sent by telegraph and paid for, but not used, merely because the columns will not contain it.

I have mentioned the transmission of news by telegraph instead of the mails as one item in the increased cost of making the metropolitan daily newspaper of to-day. A dozen more might be enumerated. On no single one does any great newspaper dare to undertake material retrenchment. To do so would be to abandon the field to its rivals. The public have been educated up to what they now receive, and would no more be put off with the newspaper of 1860 than they would tolerate again the slow mails or the antiquated railroad accommodations of 1860. But figures are after all more convincing than mere description. I have selected as the year affording the fairest data for a comparison with the present times, the year before the election which precipitated the Civil War; and, going back again to the records of the metropolitan newspaper with which I am most familiar, have extracted a few entries which tell the whole story.

In 1859 the total outlay for news, editing, type-setting, printing, and publishing, including the

IN A NEWSPAPER OFFICE

accounts of the editorial department, composing-room, press-room, publisher's department, correspondence, and telegraph, was \$130,198. On the 13th of January, 1879, the outlay for the past year in the same departments was reported at \$377,510. Yet this is, with many of the accounts, subdivided, so that a part of the outlay is charged under other heads; with all the economies of the period since the panic, in full force; with expenses at the lowest point in nearly every department they have touched for several years; with the cost of telegraphing from Washington lower than it has ever been before, and out of sight of any price any telegraph company has ever named—a cost in fact of less than two mills per word as against the old rate of from one and a half cents per word upward; with composition almost one-third lower than under the old spoliation system of the Printers' Union, and with salaries in every department made in some measure to correspond with the tendencies of the times. Let us take another year for a fairer comparison. Against the \$11,679 telegraphic expenses of 1859 set the \$51,728.88 in 1874; against the composing-room bills in 1859, amounting to \$42,256, set those for 1874, amounting to \$125,883.28. And finally, contrast the total expenses of the editorial department, including correspondence, in 1859, \$43,125, with the sum of \$188,829.45 spent for the same accounts in 1874.

Trifling as the expenditures of those early days seem to us, we come now and then upon signs of

THE PRACTICAL ISSUES

alarm already inspired in the minds of the sagacious metropolitan publishers at the evident tendency to make a better paper than the people paid for, to give more every morning than the money's worth, and thus to keep steadily approaching the time when the amount spent in making the paper would more than overbalance all that the subscribers and advertisers were willing to give for it. Thus, in 1864 I find a curious passage in a publisher's report, complaining of the extravagance in the outlay for editorial work, correspondence, composition, special telegraphing, and supplements. The feeling would seem to have been general. At any rate there had been a comparison of figures between different offices, and the prudent publisher of "The Tribune" was worried because in the five principal items of expense which he enumerated, "The Tribune" had spent in the previous year \$28,116 more than "The Times." Here are the contrasted items which he reported :

| | <i>Tribune</i> | <i>Times</i> |
|--|----------------|--------------|
| Editors and correspondence, not war | \$49,228 | \$45,660 |
| War correspondence | 25,706 | 14,040 |
| Compositors | 49,547 | 45,741 |
| Special telegraphing | 12,623 | 7,817 |
| Supplements, "Tribune" 21, "Times" 11 | 9,000 | 4,730 |

The expenses we have been considering have been taken from ordinary years. Let us now see what they are in extraordinary times. When a

IN A NEWSPAPER OFFICE

great war is raging in European countries with which we have close relations through trade, travel, and immigration, the New York reader demands as prompt and complete, if not as detailed, news as does the London reader, and a great journal cannot afford to disappoint its constituency by failing to meet this demand. See now what it costs, remembering that in 1859 telegraphic expenses were thought enormous when they had reached an annual total of \$11,679. In the Franco-Prussian War "The Tribune's" telegraphic bill, largely payable in gold, was \$85,303.51. Its additional bill for correspondence, also mostly payable in gold, was \$43,263.46. Other journals quite possibly spent more; those that did not suffered by it.

Now take another mode of estimating what it costs to try to meet the demand for the kind of newspaper to which readers have been educated. From a table of comparisons covering a series of years I select a few sample figures. We have seen that in 1859 the entire editorial expenses, including all correspondence, amounted to \$43,125. In 1866 the editorial expenses alone amounted to \$81,775, and the correspondence to \$49,300 more. In 1867 the editorial alone had swollen to \$84,778; two years later to \$96,182; two years later to \$107,525; two years later to \$133,854; two years later still to \$148,234. Meanwhile the correspondence had run up in the same fashion, until in one year it reached \$70,038. Not only was this news procured and handled in more costly ways, but

THE PRACTICAL ISSUES

there was a vast mass more of it. Note how the cost of putting it in type ran up. In 1859 we have seen that the entire expenses of the composing-room were \$42,256. Now take a few later years. In 1866 they amounted to \$86,609; in 1867 to \$91,008; in 1868 to \$94,388; in 1869 to \$100,769; in 1870 to \$105,492; in 1871 to \$107,827; in 1872 to \$113,518; in 1873 to \$117,180; in 1874 to \$125,883; and in 1875 to \$154,788.

Something has been said of the enormous increase in editorial expenses, but a few figures of individual salaries will make it clearer. From an old salary-book containing the weekly payments from 1848 to 1859, I extract from the first page some items that have now a curious sound. The first entry is Mr. Sinclair, bookkeeper, \$15; the next Mr. Strebeigh, assistant bookkeeper, \$10. Then follow Mr. Dana, assistant editor, \$14; Mr. Taylor, ditto, \$12; Mr. Cleveland, ditto, \$10; Mr. Snow, money reporter, \$12; Mr. Davies, in the courts, \$4; Mr. Towndrow, police reports, \$7; Mr. Augustus Maverick, proof-reader, \$6; Mr. Gibson, ship news and importations, \$14; Mr. March, Washington correspondent, \$20; Mr. Robinson, ditto, \$15. Now skip to the last page of this same book containing the payments for the week ending on the 31st of December, 1859. Very largely the same men made the paper. It had grown, as the record on the same page shows, from the weekly use of $168\frac{3}{4}$ reams for the daily to the use of 494 reams. Below these items stood

IN A NEWSPAPER OFFICE

the personal list, doubled or trebled in length, but with the same leading names. Reading down it now, we pick out Mr. Sinclair, bookkeeper, \$48; Mr. Strebeigh, assistant ditto, \$30; Mr. Dana, assistant editor, \$48; Mr. Ripley, ditto, \$25; Mr. Gay, ditto, \$20; Mr. Towndrow, \$14; Mr. Snow, money reporter, \$30; Mr. Gibson, ship news and importations, \$28; the Washington correspondents, \$57.50; the Count Gurowski, \$20. But the latter was not a weekly payment, and was unusually high. Many weeks the good count, who was only employed "by the piece," got nothing, and the entries opposite his name were mostly for sums of \$5 or \$10. On the books, a little further back, George William Curtis figures as city editor at \$20 per week, and Henry J. Raymond, as second on the paper, rose gradually from \$8 to \$20. Richard Hildreth wrote apparently "by the piece," and his monthly payments ranged from \$100 to \$200,—sometimes more. In 1855 William Henry Fry had risen to \$25 per week; and the next year James S. Pike was paid "for the whole Winter's work at Washington," the gross sum of \$202.50. Bayard Taylor was credited \$5 apiece for his California letters, but on his return Mr. Greeley moved and carried an advance to \$10, on the ground that "they had made a hit." Mr. Greeley's own name appears regularly on the lists of those days at \$50 per week. He afterward had it cut down to \$40; and there was never a subsequent advance which he did not resist. Once in-

THE PRACTICAL ISSUES

deed there is an entry to the effect that "Mr. Greeley protested at some length against the advance in his salary, and gave formal notice that he did not intend to earn any more than he was now receiving." For ten or a dozen years past, it has been my duty to fix the salaries on this same book. I have found plenty of gentlemen who might truthfully enough have given this last notice, but not another who made the preliminary protest!

Does the most rigid economist expect that the newspapers will or can return to these "prices before the war"? Or, to pass from the mere question of salaries, does he wish the pages of markets, foreign and domestic, to be sent once more by post, the foreign news to come by steamer, the pages of telegraphic dispatches, special and Associated Press, to be replaced by clippings from the exchanges and news-letters sent by mail? Does he wish the actual amount of matter given him each morning reduced over one-half; and does he wish the age of four-fifths of it increased from twenty-four hours to three weeks, before he is permitted to see it? But, we may be told, all this is unnecessary and deceptive. Of course, expenses have increased, but so, proportionately, have receipts. Well, to that the balance-sheet affords an exceedingly argumentative answer. On a business of half a million in 1859, as a two-cent paper, "The Tribune" made a net profit of \$86,000. At the beginning of 1879 we found that on a business of nearly three-quarters of a million as a four-cent paper,

IN A NEWSPAPER OFFICE

it had made \$85,588. The fluctuations in the interval had been at least sufficient to show that in a matter of such magnitude it was not wise to hunt for any more risks than we already had. In times of great excitement, Presidential years, and the like, the volume of business of course runs up. I have myself been able to report a net profit of \$155,000 on a business of \$974,000, and on the smaller business of \$941,000 a profit of \$171,049; and I have also had to report, on a business of \$925,465, a net loss of \$86,690. Or to rid the statement of figures, we have made \$85,000 as a two-cent paper; have spent a half more and made only the same sum as a four-cent paper. In the interval, we have sometimes spent twice as much to make only twice as much, while at other times, on a like expenditure, we lost as much.

One item of increased expense, and a cruel one, has not yet been noted. We must now pay the postage for our readers. In a single year this has amounted to \$31,698.71, every dollar of which is a dead loss. We pay more for special work on our weekly than we ever did in the old times; and its circulation to-day is larger than I find it stated by the publisher (and I never knew a publisher to understate those things) in his report at the annual meeting of the year before I became connected with the paper. And yet, with this greater cost and greater circulation, we realize less than two-thirds the receipts of those days for weekly subscriptions, and have to pay the postage on them

THE PRACTICAL ISSUES

besides. That is a sample of what comes from putting the price down, for it is on their weekly issues alone that the New York journals have chosen to reduce their rates not only to, but below, the prices charged before the war. The experiment, whether satisfactory or not, seems sufficient.

But it is time to end this cumulative array of facts and figures. I judge that they have left us all substantially of one mind. On the whole we are not likely to gratify our growler. We shall not return to the prices before the war, because we dare not return to the narrow scale of expenditure and the meagre fare before the war, while to take the old price and give the present quality is merely to plunge into bankruptcy at a gallop. The cheapest thing sold to-day in America in proportion to the cost of its manufacture is the daily newspaper. The average American is a shrewd buyer, but he does not long insist on buying an article for less than the cost of making it, for he knows that, in the long run, that means one of two things,—that he is dealing either with a fool whom he is ruining, or with a knave who is cheating him.

We have seen that the next great revolution in journalism is not likely to be a return to the cheap prices of the period before the war. We have seen that it is not likely to be in the direction of increased supplements for advertising; and that it is not likely to be in the direction of rejecting

IN A NEWSPAPER OFFICE

all advertising. What is it to be? Shall the *variety* of news now furnished by the daily newspapers be still further developed, so that, in this respect, the contrast between the journal of the next decade and that of the present shall be as great as between the journal of to-day and that of twenty years ago? Yes and no. The variety can scarcely increase because newspapers already present as many different topics of human interest as the average mind cares to concern itself with in the day's leisure of the average reader. There can scarcely be more topics treated. But they will, no doubt, be different topics. It is possible to interest large masses of people in subjects of more importance than many of those which now fill the closely printed columns of so many pages. The range can hardly be much greater, but it may be higher, and higher without being less interesting or less vivacious.

If we are to have no greater variety, shall we not have greater *quantity*? As growing capital and ever broadening resources permit, shall we not have every morning two volumes for our four cents where we have now only one? where ten years ago we had the half of one? where twenty years ago we had the half of that? Shall we not give important political debates a verbatim report, where we now print only four or five columns? Shall we not double or treble the space to be accorded the details of a great accident? Can a great public meeting be permitted to pass without a record of

THE PRACTICAL ISSUES

every syllable uttered in it? Shall we not have, in a word, brief summaries of the news for those who are hurried, supplemented by the most voluminous details for those who have special interest and ample leisure; and shall we not habitually contemplate the issue of sixteen pages to carry all this matter, where more than eight now is the exception rather than the rule?

I know very well that it is in this direction the thoughts of many of our wisest and most progressive journalists have long turned. But nothing seems clearer to me than the certainty that the great journals of the future will not make their chief progress in this direction. I do not believe that the daily newspaper of 1890 will give many more pages than that of 1880. Book-making is not journalism. Even magazine-making is not journalism. The business of a daily newspaper is to print the news of the day, in such compass that the average reader may fairly expect to master it during the day, without interfering with his regular business. When it passes beyond these limits it ceases to be a newspaper, and it ceases to command the wide support which is essential to its success. A feeling of annoyance arises in the mind of a reader who has put into his hands, in the morning, more matter than he can possibly find time to read during the day. He does not want to skip any of it, because he feels that if he does so, he may be missing something he ought to get. He cannot possibly read it, and at last, in a feeling of irritation, he abandons

IN A NEWSPAPER OFFICE

the paper, buys a smaller one in its stead, skims that, and assumes that if it was properly edited, he has missed nothing of real importance. He does not wish great masses of undigested news thrust upon him, in bulk, that he may take out what he wants. He insists that his editor shall do this for him; shall select the salient points and present them within reasonable compass. It would make no difference if you offered him the undigested mass at the same price with the compact summary. He will pay just as much for half the matter if put in manageable shape. The great revolution of the future in newspapers is not, therefore, to be in doubling their size, in doubling the quantity of matter they give, or in doubling the multitude of subjects they already treat.

But, as we have seen, the history of journalism, for fifty years, has been a rapid succession of revolutions, and no man knows as well as the hard-working editor that perfection has not yet been evolved. Other changes, as marked, are certainly impending. What is the next?

It was a pleasant conceit of Henry Watterson's that, if Shakespeare were living now, he would be an editor. The fancy might have fallen better upon a contemporary of Shakespeare's—that greatest, wisest, meanest of mankind, who anticipated the modern newspaper, in taking all knowledge to be his province. But newspapers are many and perpetual. Shakespeares and Bacons come only once

THE PRACTICAL ISSUES

in the centuries. Yet of this we may be sure: The field for advantages through enterprise in the mere getting of news is about exhausted. The great newspapers can now all command substantially the same facilities. Generally speaking, the news that one gets another can get if it wishes. Recurring, then, to Watterson's conceit, it seems safe to say that in the next great stage of journalism the enterprise that now exhausts itself on costly cable dispatches will go to men who can make a great news feature valuable rather from the story it tells than from the money spent in carrying it to you; who will buy for you a costly thing rather than challenge your admiration merely for the money spent in the costly transportation of a thing of less moment. If it must send a Stanley to Africa—and we may well hope that feats so brilliant can be repeated—it will send also a Macaulay to tell his story for him.

Why should the busy man read the history of yesterday at a greater disadvantage than the history of a hundred years ago? Yet that of a hundred years ago has been most carefully collated, sifted, winnowed, relieved of surplusage, arranged in proper perspective. You are not forced to read the official documents, to burrow among the dry reports, to study with minute and painstaking care the *disjecta membra*. You are not loaded with facts that are useless, particulars that give no form or color to the picture. All this waste is removed. Thousands of pages are searched to give you one,

IN A NEWSPAPER OFFICE

but on that one is all you need to know. A moderately industrious man might spend his lifetime reading the authorities on which Motley constructed his "Rise of the Dutch Republic," yet who—speaking of intelligent people in the mass, not of individual investigators—who cares for the authorities? Who wants anything but Motley? The greatest of recent narrative successes has been Green's "Short History of the English People." Why shall not the most enterprising journal of the next decade be that which shall still employ colossal capital to gather all the news, and then crown and fructify its expenditure by having a staff of Greens and Froudes to tell it?

Are a busy people entitled to fewer labor-saving and time-saving appliances about the affairs that most vitally concern them—the affairs of their own day and home—than about those of past centuries? Why should not the impeachment of Andrew Johnson, for instance, have been as well told for us as the impeachment of Warren Hastings? A thousand want to know the story of yesterday, where one cares for that of a hundred years ago. Shall this one command the labor, the scholarship, the genius of the world, while the thousand must toil for themselves among the confused heaps, and win now a bushel for every grain they get? I do not mean that the news of to-day must be dwarfed into the space it would receive in the histories of a hundred years hence. It must, of course, be treated with the fullness which the present, or, if you will,

THE PRACTICAL ISSUES

the fleeting interest in it demands. But the eclectic principle is precisely the same. The reader of to-day is entitled to have the story of the day told for him as skilfully as if it were the story of a hundred years ago; as attractively, in proportion to his interest in it as briefly, with as little waste and as rigid an exclusion of everything that does not add to the vividness and fidelity of the picture.

“The Saturday Review” called Macaulay the father of picturesque reporters. It is in getting such reporters that the ultimate success of the wisest and most munificent newspaper enterprise must yet display itself. Nor do I mean that it is only reporting on a grand scale that is to be thus ennobled—reporting a great battle, a revolution, a pageant that fixes the eye of the world. The genius that enriched the dramatic story of the death of Charles the Second, or the Peace of Ryswick, never showed itself to greater advantage than in that famous third chapter, wherein by a thousand subtle touches and the use of a myriad trifling incidents, like those that now lie under every reporter’s eye, there was reproduced a picture of a past age more minute, more comprehensive, more vivid, and, we may even say, more interesting, than any newspaper has given us of our own.

It will be the highest achievement of the most enterprising journalism to make, day by day, for the morning reader, such a picture of his own city, of his own country—such a picture for him of the world, indeed, of the day before. The elements of

IN A NEWSPAPER OFFICE

the picture will be arranged, too, precisely in the order I have named. In the foreground will be his own city ; the middle distance will be filled by his country ; beyond that, in the smaller proportion to which its relative importance in his eye and for his purposes entitles it, will be the rest of the world. But if the foreground is to be the city, that will require the greatest care, the most elaborate work, and certainly not the lowest order of ability. The City Department may then cease, perhaps, to be the place where the raw beginners wreak their will, and become the point at which the journalistic graduates will be expected to display their best powers and most thorough training.

This, then, I conceive to be the next great revolution in journalism. We shall not have cheaper newspapers. They are the cheapest thing sold now, considering the cost of making them. We shall not have continually growing supplement upon supplement of advertising. Individual wants will seek mediums more suitable. Only general wants will need the wider publicity of great journals, and these will be kept, by the increasing cost, within manageable compass. We shall not have more news. The world is ransacked for it now. Earth, sea, and air carry it to us from every capital, from every people, from every continent, and from every island. We shall not have bigger newspapers ; they are bigger now than a busy people can read. We shall have better newspapers ; the story better told ; better brains employed in the telling ; briefer pa-

THE PRACTICAL ISSUES

pers; papers dealing with the more important of current matters in such style and with such fascination that they will command the widest interest. There will be more care and ability in selecting, out of the myriad of things you might tell, the things that the better people want to be told, or ought to be told. There will be greater skill in putting these things before them in the most convenient and attractive shape. Judgment in selecting the news; genius in telling it—that is the goal for the highest journalistic effort of the future. In making a newspaper, the heaviest item of expense used to be the white paper. Now it is the news. By and by, let us hope, it will be the brains.

What shall be the relations of this new journal of the future toward parties? I may claim to have been one of the apostles of independent journalism, but the zeal of the new converts has quite left me among the old fogies. It never occurred to me that in refusing to obey blindly every behest of a party it was necessary to keep entirely aloof from party—to shut off one's self from the sole agency through which, among a free people, lasting political results can be attained. A government like ours without parties is impossible. Substantial reforms can only be reached through the action of parties. The true statesman and the really influential editor are those who are able to control and guide parties, not those who waste their strength in merely thrusting aside and breaking up the only

IN A NEWSPAPER OFFICE

tools with which their work can be done. There is an old question as to whether a newspaper controls public opinion or public opinion controls the newspaper. This at least is true: that editor best succeeds who best interprets the prevailing and the *better* tendencies of public opinion, and who, whatever his personal views concerning it, does not get himself too far out of relations to it. He will understand that a party is not an end, but a means; will use it if it lead to his end,--will use some other if that serve better, but will never commit the folly of attempting to reach the end without the means. He may not blindly follow a party; in undertaking to lead it he may get ahead of it, or even against it; but he will never make the mistake of undervaluing a party, or attempting to get on permanently and produce lasting results without one. Far less will he conceive that his journalistic integrity can only be maintained by refusing to believe good of his own party save upon demonstrative evidence; while for the sake of "fairness," he refuses to believe evil of his opponents save on evidence of the same sort. What his precise relation to a party is to be, must be determined by his own character, the character of the party, and the circumstances affecting both; but some relation is inevitable, unless he would be impotent. Of all the puerile follies that have masqueraded before High Heaven in the guise of Reform, the most childish has been the idea that the editor could vindicate his independence only by sitting on the fence and

THE PRACTICAL ISSUES

throwing stones with impartial vigor alike at friend and foe.

Granting, then, that all great newspapers which aim to accomplish any considerable results, or exert any considerable influence upon the organized public opinion of their time, will come to be classed as generally acting with or in advance of one or another great party, is there not still a wide field upon which the whole Press, irrespective of party affiliations or tendencies, should unite? With some minor disagreements as to methods, may we not substantially work all together, on at least these three pressing necessities of the time:

1. A constant, systematic supervision of local government, in all things affecting taxes and the increase of local debt. There is no need to enlarge upon the crushing evils of the municipal extravagance which for some years has run riot over the whole continent. We have been accustomed to talk with bated breath of the enormous size and stifling weight of our national debt. Yet to manage the national debt is child's play compared with the task of placing on any solvent basis, and within manageable compass, the municipal obligations of the country. Said one of the wisest financiers of the West, "If I lived in New York, I should feel bound to devote a considerable part of every day in my own self-defence, in coöperation with other capitalists, in an attempt to keep the city government within bounds, and to keep down taxes." He has since

IN A NEWSPAPER OFFICE

learned that he might, to advantage, have been at work for years at the same task in his own city. It is a policy on which all newspapers might fairly unite. It is at least one to which the best efforts of every editor who wishes well to the city which sustains him should, without cant, honestly and clear-sightedly be directed.

2. Equally hearty should be the union of effort toward an examination of all charities. The growth of this interest is something enormous. The abuses connected with it are equally startling, and the mischievous effects are only second to the evils wrought upon the whole community by municipal extravagance.

3. It does not seem to me quite a truism, as some may regard it, nor yet quite utopian, as others surely will, to declare that the Press ought to join heartily, in right brotherly accord, no matter what the party differences, in waging war on abuses affecting the public morals. Does anybody suppose that, if we did, we should see on our statute-books laws against vice which nobody enforces and nobody expects to see enforced? How long would policy shops thrive against such a union? How long would Excise Commissioners defy the decency of the community by licensing peanut stands as "hotels," in order that they might sell liquor in defiance of law?

We might well wish, but with less hope, for a similar agreement upon the great problem of the treatment of criminal news. None of us have to

THE PRACTICAL ISSUES

deal with a more perplexing question, and as yet the men of goodwill in the profession have reached no common ground about it. Meantime, those who value immediate pecuniary success above any other consideration have found the criminal news a real gold mine, and explore and exploit it accordingly.

A great newspaper must make money. Money-making, indeed, may not be the sole object ; may, perhaps, not be the chief object, since it is a profession, and not a mere trade, which editors conduct. But whether for influence or durable success, a sound commercial basis is indispensable to a great daily newspaper. Prosperity carries weight; solvency gives a sense of security. The paper which supports itself respectably can better expect to have its opinions regarded by others. It must, therefore, rest for its chief support upon the honest sale of wares the public want. Whenever it does not it becomes a mere journal of propagandism, and it lacks influence precisely in proportion as it lives by passing the hat. Young editors are likely to grow up in an atmosphere of opposition to the counting-room. As they become older they cease to despise the base of their supplies, and will be ready to give some careful consideration to certain counting-room points:

1. There can be but one head to a newspaper, and that head, in the nature of things, must be its editor. The control cannot with safety reside in the counting-room. In younger days I was disposed to

IN A NEWSPAPER OFFICE

depreciate the publisher. Long since I learned the folly of that, but I insist, as strongly now as ever, that the place for final decision must be the editor's chair. No newspaper can have the highest respect whose editor does not peremptorily say when occasion requires, "I will not insert that advertisement at any cost. I am not willing to lay it before my readers." "I will criticise that abuse, no matter what advertisements it may drive away from us." And again, "I will not put that advertisement in that place or in that type, no matter what they are willing to pay for it." Wherever there is a conflict between the counting-room and the editorial-room on these or a hundred similar and larger points, there is always weakness and loss of public respect, no matter which side prevails. All successful newspaper conduct points to the necessity of an absolute autocracy, with the autocrat in the editor's chair.

2. One golden rule should be kept before every occupant of the counting-room: "This is a one-price establishment." There is no other fair way for advertisers; there is no other self-respecting way for a newspaper. If you sell a certain part of your space at all, sell it under the same conditions to all alike. There is no special dispensation for newspapers which permits them to commit commercial sins and escape the commercial penalty. If you do a "Cheap John" business, you must take a "Cheap John" standing. If you want a business as solid as that of A. T. Stewart, you must abide by the com-

THE PRACTICAL ISSUES

mercial maxims that made his success. The moment one advertising agent is able to get a ten-line advertisement into your columns under any particular classification cheaper than another one can, or cheaper than any individual customer can (the recognized commission excepted), that moment your business has ceased to be an honest commercial business, and has degenerated into dicker. There can be no safer rule for a publisher than to dismiss any employee who, for any consideration, takes an advertisement from any quarter for less than the honest rate the paper professes to charge for it, or who charges anybody else a penny more than that rate. All this sounds like a truism, and yet we shall be nearer the golden age when more newspapers adopt a policy at once so simple, so straightforward, and so remunerative.

3. Sell your wares for what they are. Don't surrender to the vulgar folly that you must make advertisers believe that you have an incredible circulation, or even that you have the largest circulation. The value of a circulation is often comparative, anyway; one paper with a list of but ten thousand may be worth as much as another which prints one hundred thousand. The public is finding out the humbug about big circulations, and sooner or later it goes where it gets its money's worth. "The Nation" announces that it prints only seventy-five hundred copies, all told, yet it gets fifteen cents a line for its advertising, has plenty of it, and gives the money's worth every time. There is but one rea-

son of the least weight against publishing a daily statement of circulation. The public have been so demoralized by the grotesque ideas of numbers, not merely as to newspapers but in a hundred other matters, with which every editor is familiar, that ordinary figures have largely lost their significance. You all know how a meeting which completely packs a hall with seats for five hundred is always spoken of as a gathering of thousands; how a man who is known to have a few thousand dollars in each of two or three ventures presently becomes, in the current talk, worth a hundred thousand, while from that to being a millionaire who swindles the tax collector in his returns is the shortest sort of a step. Not until the administrator comes to look up the assets is the delusion discovered, and then the dear public goes through the same old amazement over and over again. Just such mistakes exist perpetually in the popular fancy in regard to the circulations of favorite newspapers, until there is scarcely one in the country which can frankly state exactly what it prints, handsome as the showing might be, without disappointing some of its champions, who, having lost the meaning of figures, would think it certainly entitled to double as much. But the policy of preposterous brag on circulation has ceased to pay. The other members of the profession know, and the public will learn, that there is some sort of proportion between means and ends, that the range of circulation and the mechanical facilities for producing it bear some relation to the

THE PRACTICAL ISSUES

real figures, and should to the figures given. In my cotton-planting days a genial, hearty rebel neighbor, General Yorke, undertook to take the conceit out of his Yankee friend. "How are you getting along cotton-picking?" said he. "Oh, fairly well." "How much are you getting out?" "About a bale a day," was the practical and unsophisticated answer. "Oh, indeed," said the general, "that is doing very well for a Yankee; very well." "And how are you getting on?" returned the Northerner. "Oh, I am picking pretty lively now; I am getting out about eight bales a day." Rushing home in hot haste, I called up the "driver" of the picking gang, and exclaimed, "Jasper, General Yorke says he is getting out eight bales a day. Now we are getting out only one, though we have more cotton here than he has. You must bring your people down to their work, and not let the cotton go to waste." Jasper scratched his head awhile and said, "Did you say Massa Yorke say he gittin' out eight bales a day?" "Yes." "Well, Massa Yorke a mighty good man. But did he *say* he gittin' out eight bales a day?" "Yes, I tell you, that 's just what he said." "Well," continued the puzzled negro, scratching his head more vigorously, "Massa Yorke 's a berry good man. If he *say* he git eight bales a day, he git 'em; but dis I know fo' sho': he haul 'em all in at one load, on one fo'-mule wagon." The case was disposed of; and the similar brag of the newspaper publisher who issues fifty thousand copies a day and prints them on one four-cylinder press between half-past

IN A NEWSPAPER OFFICE

four and six in the morning, admits of as ready and complete elucidation.

4. Sell your own wares; don't fool away time trying to run down your neighbor's. What difference does it make what his circulation is? Probably you don't know much about it anyway; but you do know about your own. Put a fair price on space in that, and give your whole mind to selling it. If your space is worth the price you ask, you can get all the advertising you want, whenever business is prosperous enough to warrant it, or advertisers are wise enough to know how to make business. Arnold & Constable sell their goods by offering at a fair price what the public want, and forcing the public to know it,—not by standing around criticising the offers of A. T. Stewart & Co. and Lord & Taylor. An old rule (French, I think, in its origin) used to fix the value of the ordinary advertising in a daily newspaper going among the better classes—the classes likely to buy and with taste enough to want good things—at one cent per line per thousand copies of actual circulation. It was a fair rule. There are plenty of papers that charge more and earn it. But on the whole it will be a good thing for the daily papers having their largest circulation among the best people when they are able to enforce that rate. The essential thing is to have *some* rate, fixed with reference to the actual value of the circulation, and to adhere honestly to it with all alike.

5. Keep the advertising in the advertising col-

THE PRACTICAL ISSUES

umns. I realize that this is not the golden age, and that we cannot expect impossibilities. I do not know of five considerable newspapers in the United States rigidly adhering to-day to this rule; I doubt if there is one that has never, under any temptation, departed from it. But we can all see that honest dealing with our readers, and honest dealing with our advertisers, alike tend in this direction. It may be said, plausibly enough, that there is a wide class of subjects in which the public has a certain interest, while private parties have a greater interest; that there is, therefore, a certain legitimate excuse for publishing matter about them as news, and also a certain legitimate excuse for taking pay for it as advertising. But this opens too many doubtful questions, and gives the cash drawer too great a leverage on the editor's judgment, as to the real degree of public interest in the news. The safe way, the true way, the way to which we are ultimately coming, not soon, perhaps, but surely, is to put whatever is to be paid for squarely and honestly into columns that are recognized as paid for; to select what is to be printed as news solely with reference to the largest interest of the widest number; and then, if such selection happens to further private interest as well, to take the pay for that in the high esteem with which those interested will come to regard a newspaper so judicious in its selections.

6. Have we not nearly reached the limit of public patience in the matter of type? May we not fairly insist soon on a reform which shall make all type

IN A NEWSPAPER OFFICE

readable, none of it so small as to be trying to ordinary eyes; and none of it so large and grotesque as to be offensive to ordinary taste?

7. Shall we not soon recognize the fact that the fast printing-presses, demanded by the needs of the great newspapers, are not adapted to the printing of engravings? Can we not persuade advertisers to abandon the effort to make these presses do what they were never intended to do? If double prices for cuts will not persuade them out of it, if blotches where they look for pictures will not, then will it not soon be time to try stones instead of grass, and to drive the cuts out of your advertising orchards at any cost?

But these are mere business reforms. There are those who insist that the thing really needed is what the old Scotch divines used to call "root and branch work"—that the whole man is sick, the whole heart faint. The elder times, they say, were better than these; the whole character of the Press is steadily deteriorating.

Well, we have faults enough. And yet the elder times were not better than these. There was never a time when the Press resisted greater temptations, or more resolutely maintained a level above its surroundings. The thing always forgotten by the closet critic of the newspapers is that they must be measurably what their audiences make them—what their constituencies call for and sustain. The newspaper cannot uniformly resist the popular

THE PRACTICAL ISSUES

sentiment any more than the stream can flow above its fountain. To say that the newspapers are getting worse is to say that the people are getting worse. That doctrine our superfine moralists have croaked ever since we had an existence as a people; but whenever the crisis came we have always found that, beneath the surface froth, the currents of national life flowed pure and strong as ever. The evil tendencies of the Press in our day are to be seen plainly enough; they have been seen in all days, since the first newspaper was made. It even works more evil now than it ever wrought before, because its influence is more widespread; but it also works more good, and its habitual attitude is one of effort toward the best its audience will tolerate. There is not a newspaper to-day in New York, faulty as they all are, that is not better than its audience. There is not an editor in New York who does not know the fortune that awaits the man there who is willing to make a daily paper as disreputable and vile as a hundred and fifty thousand readers would be willing to buy. It is the newspaper opportunity of the time—the only great opportunity that has come since the concentration of capital and mechanical facilities gave the monopoly of the present field to the existing journals. Several of these might take it; the editor of every one of them knows he is making a better paper than his constituency would like, and that he might add a half to his circulation by making it worse; every one of them knows that a less scrupulous

IN A NEWSPAPER OFFICE

rival may come to do what he refuses. It is with an ill grace that theoretical reformers reproach these men for lowering the newspaper standard, and making journalism a curse instead of a blessing.

But there are plenty of things we ought to reform. First among these I reckon the general tendency, even with the soberest and maturest journals, to the faults of youth. In the nature of things, this tendency will be constant, for young men do most of the reporting and a good deal of the editing, and always must. The rank and file can no more be made up of gray-beards in a newspaper than in an army in the field. Now youth, and particularly youth intrusted with power, is hasty, impetuous, given to rash ways. It is sure to be hot tempered and apt to be acrid. It naturally overstates the case. It is always aggressive, and is in danger of being uncharitable. In the pride of its superior wisdom it is often over-critical; and it often mistakes a sneer for an argument. It miscalculates its resources. It mistakes the work it has in hand; it sometimes undervalues opponents, and again it sometimes trains its heaviest artillery on mosquitoes. Just such are the faults which a candid observer must find more or less developed in a majority of our newspapers. The wise editor will reckon upon them as constant forces, with which he must always deal, against which he must be on perpetual guard.

Nor will he mistake the public judgment, if he assume it to be ill pleased with much of this youth-

THE PRACTICAL ISSUES

ful effervescence. Our people like well enough to see a hearty knock-down blow given; but they hate a perpetual nagging. A daily diet of snarl and sneer is not to their taste. They like to have their paper positive and frank; they like to feel that for a good cause and at the right time it can make a hard fight; but they prefer that its natural attitude should be kindly (critical enough it is sure to be anyway), and that its prevailing tone should be one of good humor. They don't want to rise from its perusal, every morning, with a bad taste in their mouths. The editor who commands their respect and persuades their judgment must keep his temper, must keep out of petty personal controversies, must be seen to have higher motives for attack than spite, and higher motives for praise than mutual admiration. In a word, the spirit that habitually controls the columns must be clearly recognizable as one of justice and goodwill.

In that spirit we might escape the present tendency to run in ruts, both with our praise and our blame,—so that, no matter what a man does, we can pretty safely predict at once what a good many papers are going to say about it. If he is a man they are in the habit of praising, it takes little less than arson or highway robbery, demonstrably proved, to force them to hint a fault. If he is a man they generally blame, he is promptly and as a matter of course assumed to be guilty, however wanton or unlikely the charge, unless he can instantly prove himself innocent. Nor will any mod-

erate array of proof suffice. He must make a case absolutely impregnable, with the presumptions all held rigidly against him. Nay, even if his innocence be demonstrated by the exclusion of every possibility of guilt, it will still be grudgingly remarked that, while this explanation seems plausible, it is a very bad scrape, anyway, for such a man to be getting mixed up in! Through this unfortunate tendency, blackmailers and all manner of personal enemies find the Press their most serviceable ally. Let them but start a malignant story against a prominent man, and the whole hostile Press may be counted on to espouse it for them, push it, and carry relentlessly forward the work of persecution. Here is the open secret of the enormous spread in this country of calumny and personal abuse. Only get the Press out of these ruts of praise and blame, and the half of it is annihilated — strangled before it is born.

Is the power of the Press declining? Every little while some discontented clergyman or extinct politician declares it is. Quite recently they have given us very solemn discourses about it. Newspapers are more read, they admit, but less heeded. With the air of discoverers they tell us of the great things done by journals of the past generation, and triumphantly exclaim: "But who minds now what a newspaper says?" There were giants in those days; only pigmies walk the earth to-day. In the earlier times the great newspaper stood for

a great force ; now it only stands for a great noise. It has become selfish, it wants to make money, it is on a commercial basis now, it actually supports itself—how can such a Press wield the old influence? I wish to speak with due respect ; but really this sort of talk—and we hear a good deal of it, from unsuccessful quarters—seems to me the twaddle of mushy sentimentalists. Far wiser and manlier was the tone taken by Lord Macaulay, in opening his great history: “Those who compare the age on which their lot has fallen with a golden age which exists only in their imagination, may talk of degeneracy and decay ; but no man who is correctly informed as to the past will be disposed to take a morose or desponding view of the present.”

It is easy to marshal the great names of the past, and idle to try to match them from among the living. We count no man great, anyway, till he is dead. But great men do not necessarily make the greatest newspapers. As well might you challenge “The London Times,” in the zenith of its influence, say in 1855, to prove itself the equal of the old “Publick Advertiser,” of the century before, and crush it with the taunt, “Where have you a man the equal of Junius?” As well twit our newspapers of the seaboard to-day with their inferiority to the old “Pennsylvania Gazette,” because among them all is to be found no Benjamin Franklin. Most true it is that the foremost editorial writer of our time has had and is to have no successor. Horace Greeley stood alone, without a peer and

without a rival,—not perhaps the ideal editor, but, fairly judged, the ablest master of controversial English and the most successful popular educator the journalism of the English-speaking world has yet developed. I remember how through half his career the men he had angered were always saying *his* power had declined.

It is not true that the ability of the Press is declining. The papers of the country are better written now than they ever were before. They are better edited. Their average courtesy is greater; their average morality is purer; their average tendency higher. They better hit the wants of great, miscellaneous communities, and so they have more readers in proportion to population. Their power may be more diffused; but it is unmistakably greater. There has been no more remarkable phenomenon in the history of the profession than the rapid growth of the country Press, and its increase in ability, in resources, in self-respect, and in influence. There are half a dozen towns in the interior of New York which now have better newspapers, with larger income and more influence, than those of the metropolis itself a third or perhaps even a quarter of a century ago.

Let the croakers take any of these towns, or any considerable town in the country, and compare the character and the influence of its Press with that of a generation ago, or of the period just before the war. Take Rochester, or Utica, or Troy. Take the leading papers of the New York State Association, .

and compare their circulation, their standing, their actual control of state affairs, with what they were in 1860. Or take my own old home, of which I may speak the more readily, since I think I know it well. We are very quick at singling out the foibles of its leading editors. Even the Cincinnatians themselves are ready, now and then, in a spiteful mood, to long for the good old days of "Charley" Hammond, and the other half-forgotten worthies of a half-barbarous period. Yet I undertake to say that from the year when the first-comers established themselves in Colonel Israel Ludlow's village around the fort and Indian trading-post opposite the mouth of the Licking, down to this year of grace 1879, there has never been a year when the Press of Cincinnati was so ably written or so full of news, was so much read or so much followed as it is to-day; never a year when it had so much to do with shaping the policy of Ohio, and of the Ohio valley; never a year when its influence counted for so much in the nation; never a year when so much power was concentrated there in so few hands as rests to-day in those of Murat Halstead, Richard Smith, and John McLean. If you dispute it, name the time, the papers, the men!

No! The power of the newspaper is not declining. Never before was it so great. Never before did it offer such a career. But it is power accompanied by the usual conditions,—greatest when most self-respecting and least self-seeking. There is more good, young blood tending to this than to any of the

other professions. There is more movement in it than in bar, or pulpit, or whatever other so-called learned profession you will,—more growth, a larger opportunity, a greater future. We are getting the best. These young men will leave us far behind. They will achieve a usefulness and command a power to which we cannot aspire. Very crude and narrow will seem our worthiest work to the able editors of a quarter or a half century hence—very splendid will be the structure they erect. We shall not rear the columns or carve the capitals for that stately temple. Let us at least aspire, with honest purpose and on a wise plan, to lay aright its foundations.

AN EDITOR'S REFLECTIONS

III

RECENT CHANGES IN THE PRESS

RECENT CHANGES IN THE PRESS

THERE is a familiar phrase, still carelessly accepted by nearly everybody, which is, in fact, as completely out of date as the Ptolemies. Generations of Americans and of Englishmen have quoted, and still quote it as a final utterance about the secret birth of that modern ruler of the world, Public Opinion: "Let me make the songs of a people, and I care not who makes its laws." But where is the song-writer to-day, compared with the reporter? Who is there who does not read the newspapers? What reading reaches your mind each new day, at such prosperous moments? What reading is resumed with such absolute regularity, day after day, and morning and evening? What song,—nay, what poem, play, speech, novel, scripture,—what other utterance of any kind, unfailingly gets your attention, every day of your life,—before you set out, taking from it its color as you face the world; when you return, accepting its evening reflections on the day, instead of even framing your own?

Some adequate comprehension of this tremendous fact in modern life was no doubt the motive for founding here a course of lectures, expected to deal primarily with newspapers and the public questions they raise. In appearing before you as the first lecturer in this new course, I am unwilling to proceed at once to my subject without a word in grateful memory of the honored son of Yale to whom the foundation is due. Mr. Isaac H. Bromley may

RECENT CHANGES IN THE PRESS

best be rated, perhaps, in terms which Yale will fully appreciate, by saying that he was a member, and peer to the foremost, in the Class of '53. More than once it was my privilege to be admitted to the reunions of that famous class. Randall Gibson and Andrew D. White and Edmund C. Stedman, and Wayne MacVeagh and George W. Smalley and Theodore Bacon, and Mr. Justice Shiras and Henry C. Robinson and Charlton T. Lewis, and many another as well known surrounded the board, but among them all no man would have reckoned Mr. Bromley in other than the front rank.

He led distinctly a newspaper career, first on journals under his own control here in Connecticut, then on two or three in New York and Buffalo, either as editor-in-chief or editorial contributor, and finally as a member of my staff on "The New York Tribune." There was an interruption of a few years during which he acted as assistant to the president of the Union Pacific Railway, Mr. Charles Francis Adams; and then he returned to his old desk at "The Tribune," which he left again only on his way to his long home. I shall not detain you to speak of the rare quality of his writing, of his inimitable wit, or of his lovable personality. But there is one incident in his service which perhaps may be recalled as an appropriate introduction to the lectures he wished delivered to Yale men about newspaper work. He had been as enthusiastic as any of us in our campaign for Hayes against Tilden for the Presidency. But on the day after the elec-

RECENT CHANGES IN THE PRESS

tion he made up his mind that we had probably lost. When the dispute over the result broke out, he became more and more disturbed at the steady support given by our editorial page to the Republican claim of General Hayes's election. At first he merely avoided writing on the subject. Then he began stating his doubts to his associates, and even offering them to me in editorial form. Next he thought it his duty to address me a long and cogent letter of remonstrance against my course; and finally he came to me with the statement that he felt as if he must give up all connection with a journal whose attitude in such a national crisis he could not conscientiously approve. It was not till I was able to tell him some of the facts which were afterward elaborately developed in our translation of the famous cipher dispatches from Gramercy Park that his purpose was changed and he was content to resume his usual routine.

In these days, when a newspaper office is sometimes sold with its staff like a livery stable with its stock; when some editorial writers pass freely from an Administration to an anti-Administration paper, from a Tammany organ to a Republican organ, or from a protective tariff to a free trade one, without the drooping of an eyelid, or a sign that they consider the change more important than that of the bricklayer who passes from work on a church to work on a dance-hall or liquor saloon, it is good to remember editors of another kind, and to begin these lectures by recalling this character-

RECENT CHANGES IN THE PRESS

istic incident in the life of the man who founded them.

There may be a justification for the lawyer who exerts his utmost ability and exhausts every legal artifice in the effort to acquit a client whom he suspects or believes to be guilty. But it is a practice one does not admire, even in a profession where the ministers of justice themselves may sometimes assign such a duty. For my own part, I should be ashamed of the vocation I have followed through life if I thought its successful pursuit involved the editorial writer in advocating one doctrine he did not believe or making one statement he did not think true. Far better, more manly, more dignified, more self-respecting and respected, to be at once the hod-carrier on the liquor saloon. He at least practises no sham and tells no lies.

I know well enough how prevalent now is a contrary view of editorial ethics,—especially in the large cities and among subordinates at least in some of the most popular and widely read newspapers. “Yes, that is exactly the opposite of what I used to write on ‘The Clarion,’” I have heard more than one bright man say, “but what would you have? I must furnish what I can find a market for!” Gentlemen, and scholars of Yale, I feel sure that like Dr. Johnson in a similar case, you will not recognize that necessity. The man might at least have dug potatoes, and remained respectable. There is no law compelling you to write editorials you do not believe, no order of court that may be con-

RECENT CHANGES IN THE PRESS

strued into permitting you to attempt making the worse appear the better reason; and there is still in the mind of every honest educated man a wholesome loathing for that leprous form of modern degeneracy, the intellectual prostitute.

There has never been a time, I think, in the history of colleges in this country, when so many of their students were looking toward the possibility of a newspaper career. There is a feeling, on the one hand, that the professions are overcrowded; and on the other, that the newer fields to which applied science and business beckon, offer at the outset slower advances and less attractive experiences. The idea of being brought into contact with all forms of public life, of seeing great transactions and watching the actors in them, of writing from day to day the history of a marvellous age,—all this naturally fascinates the ardent and aspiring mind. It is true, too, that the young man of good qualifications gets quicker returns in newspaper work than elsewhere. If he studies law, three or four years more must be taken out of his life after his graduation, before he can enter upon his vocation; and then he has the cheerful prospect of starvation for as many more before clients begin to find him out. A similar delay confronts the medical student, and patients often display a similar backwardness about coming forward to the young doctor's office. But the college graduate who once gets a chance assignment on a busy day, in a city editor's book, may

RECENT CHANGES IN THE PRESS

find himself with as many more as he cares for within a fortnight, and may presently secure a modest salary that with health and industry at once puts him beyond want. Then there are fascinations in the sense of influence, in the power to reach the public attention or shape public opinion, even in the facility for coming in contact with important men and getting somewhat behind the scenes in transactions that interest the whole community.

It cannot be denied that there is a certain justice in many of these considerations. And yet the first advice a competent and experienced newspaper man is apt to give a young aspirant will be the old one, "Don't." It is an irregular, exacting, exposing, tempted life. It demands intense and long-continued application; breaks into all manner of engagements; entails its hardest work at moments when everybody else is at leisure; and requires, even when pursued by gentlemen, under the direction of a gentleman, occasional situations from which a gentleman's first impulse is to shrink. Besides there are, after all, fewer prizes in it than in the old professions. Any of you can count up forty or fifty men now in New York who have won distinction and fortune in the law. Can you count half as many who are doing as well in both particulars on the newspapers? Nor can it be said that the tendency in the law appears yet to be toward diminishing the number or value of these prizes. Among the newspapers it does seem to be that way. Great success does not always bring esteem, or fortune,

RECENT CHANGES IN THE PRESS

or permanence. The lower walks of the business are enormously overcrowded; the competition is not always scrupulous, and the pay is apt to be very small. Besides, the objective point of half the collegians in the country, who want to get into the newspapers, is New York; and that is precisely the place in the whole country most overrun already with applicants, and so busy as to be most chillingly indifferent to newcomers.

A certain number of young men who have been coquetting with the idea of newspaper work after graduation will be discouraged by such considerations; and if so, I shall certainly have done them a benefit. On the other hand, neither they nor the whole host of other disadvantages that might be marshalled will discourage some others. These will not be harmed by having paused to reflect upon them; but the man who cannot be persuaded or discouraged or frightened out of a newspaper office is practically the only man who is reasonably sure of making a success of it. In the past forty years I have advised hundreds of young men to keep away from newspaper work, and can scarcely recall having advised one to enter it. The men who were possessed with the idea, who had eaten the insane weed, and could not be restored to their old estate, the men who could n't be driven away from the newspaper doors, were the men who succeeded. No young man should take such a decision, however, under the idea that the newspaper press of

RECENT CHANGES IN THE PRESS

America is now the institution he has read about, or formed a favorable idea of, fifteen years ago. It is undergoing transformations with the rapidity of a prestidigitateur. Within the lifetime of the boys now in the preparatory schools, fitting for Yale, the changes have been almost revolutionary; and while they were largely physical at the outset, they necessarily opened the way to moral changes as striking. It will be an advantage at least to comprehend these physical and moral changes, before rushing into the business.

I had occasion recently to revise an article on American newspapers, which I had been requested, fifteen or sixteen years ago, to prepare for the ninth edition of the "Encyclopædia Britannica." In that I had mentioned that there was then only one daily illustrated paper in America. Now it would probably be easier to enumerate those without illustrations than those with them. It was mentioned then that most of the newspapers springing up were of the four-page class, originating in a reaction against large or blanket sheets; that they aimed at great condensation of routine news, though with "special prominence for sensations," and were coming to be sold for the low price of two cents. Note the changes now from that short-lived reaction. First, the world never saw as large and long-winded papers as those of to-day. On special occasions, or on Sundays, they often rise to sixty pages, and at times to a hundred, or even more. For the ordinary week-day issues, a com-

RECENT CHANGES IN THE PRESS

mon average in the great cities is from twelve to twenty-four pages. Secondly, the notion of a condensed newspaper has in most cases been thrown to the winds. Even routine news, casual city reports, and the Associated Press dispatches from remote and unimportant points are often stretched out to an inordinate length and with wearisome detail. Far more miscellaneous news is collected than ever before—far more, in fact, than the most prolix of newspapers is ever able to print. Tedious as the published reports are, nearly every New York newspaper still throws into the waste basket, every night, masses of “copy” which the Associated Press brings it. On the other hand, the sensational news is now expanded, displayed, and exploited beyond all precedent. The theory seems to be that what takes with the public now is no longer quality but quantity. Again the two-cent paper, instead of being still a novelty as twenty years ago, is beginning to be called by some leaders of the current journalistic movement, “a back number.” Many old papers have reduced their price from four, three, or two cents to one, and hosts of new one-cent papers have sprung up, often as large as those sold for three times as much. And next, with the increase in size and the reduction in price, has come a marked change in the habits of the American newspaper reader. He often buys two or three papers in the morning, where one formerly contented him. He reads none of them with the thoroughness or care he used to give to the sin-

RECENT CHANGES IN THE PRESS

gle one he then took, and he is apt to be less influenced by what any of them say. In fact, cursory and thoughtless skimming of a number of newspapers every day has with large classes almost displaced the reading of books, and become a species of intellectual dissipation, on which many fritter away their time, damage their powers of attention, and befuddle their brains, till they come near justifying that quaint definition with which a Philadelphia philanthropist required the exclusion from the library and reading-room he was founding of "those teachers of disjointed thinking, the daily newspapers."

What is the intellectual state to be naturally expected after a morning spent in reading details of the petty defalcation of a county treasurer you never heard of, in a Western town you don't know anything about; details of some domestic infelicity of a salesman in a "dry-goods emporium" in Kansas City, who has had the misfortune to admire an actress in St. Louis; details next of a fire in East Haddam Four Corners, and next of a cloudburst in Dakota, and next of a raid by cattle thieves near the Colorado Canyon, and next of a dinner in the American Colony in Paris, with an account of the ladies' gowns, and of a scandal among singers in London, with biographies and portraits; and next five sentences from an hour's speech of Mr. Chamberlain on the British policy in South Africa, and not even five sentences from Mr. Campbell-Bannerman's reply, but a graphic account of how he and Arthur Balfour were

RECENT CHANGES IN THE PRESS

dressed; and next somebody's guess at Mr. Hanna's secret purpose in his advocacy of a ship subsidy, and a speculation as to why Fred Grant has been made a brigadier in the regular army,—all this read between cigars and with punctuations of talk about the weather and stocks; and then the whole of it read over again under different headings and with different display in another newspaper? Did the *Philadelphian* only say “disjointed thinking”? Why didn't he say “arrested thinking, and an intellectual state of oyster-like consciousness”?

It may clarify your ideas concerning the newspapers of to-day and aid a decision about devoting a life to work upon them, if we give some attention to circumstances which have promoted, indeed compelled, these revolutionary changes in their character and conduct.

The first far-reaching circumstance was the amazing decline in the cost of the raw material. Within my individual experience I have bought paper at from twenty-two cents per pound to a cent and a half per pound! As late as 1873 I found myself entangled in a contract for a very poor quality of straw paper, rough and brittle, at twelve and a half cents. Then came the inventions for making paper out of wood. Improvements in this process reduced the price and stimulated consumption; while the increasing consumption in turn attracted more capital into paper mills and introduced all the

RECENT CHANGES IN THE PRESS

economies that combination and manufacture on the largest scale permit. The price of a fair quality of white paper for newspaper use thus steadily declined till the annual averages in New York were as follows:

| | |
|------|----------------------|
| 1875 | 8.53 cents per pound |
| 1880 | 6.92 cents per pound |
| 1885 | 5.16 cents per pound |
| 1890 | 3.38 cents per pound |

At last in 1897 large consumers were able to make contracts in New York for paper, delivered at their press-room doors, at one and a half cents a pound. The combinations which over-competition compelled, together with some other circumstances, have led since then to a slight rise, but New York papers, prudent enough to submit early to small advances and make contracts in time, are still buying at less than two cents per pound, or at less than one-eleventh of the price in the last year of the Civil War.

The transformation in printing machinery kept pace with that in the manufacture of paper. During the Civil War the greatest newspapers were still printed on separate sheets, fed by hand, one by one, to revolving cylinders, that were built up, one over another, into lofty and cumbrous machines which sometimes required forty feet of head room. There was a separate feeder for each cylinder, and another man to look after the printed output from each. After all the sheets for the current edition had been thus fed in, printed, and arranged

RECENT CHANGES IN THE PRESS

in piles, they were then turned over, lifted up to the several cylinders, and fed in again to print the other side. Next they were carried to a group of folding-machines and again fed into these by hand. They were then counted and arranged in bundles for the newspaper dealers or the mail by a small army of men in the mailing and delivery rooms. The first great change, cheapening and quickening this process, came from the invention of machinery by which a continuous roll of paper could be drawn, under pressure, almost simultaneously over one revolving cylinder and under another, thus getting both sides printed at once, and then under a knife which cut it into sheets. This banished the multitude of feeders, did away with the necessity of running the half-printed sheets through again to print the other side, and thus greatly cheapened as well as quickened the process. Then came another invention by which an attachment to this "Web press" received the printed sheets, as they were unwound from the roll, printed, and cut off. It led each sheet between tapes and under bars and rollers that folded them one after another, pasted the leaves together, cut the edges, and automatically counted the papers into bundles of twenty, fifty, or one hundred. This banished the folding-machines with their attendants, and the army of counters; and another enormous reduction in the cost of producing a newspaper had been effected.

Next improvements in stereotyping made it pos-

RECENT CHANGES IN THE PRESS

sible to duplicate rapidly the plates for each page of the newspaper. Press-makers took advantage of this to build double machines that should carry two plates for each page and so print two newspapers at once; and, this path once opened, the course was continued, till now we have presses that carry four, six, or eight sets of plates, and print four, six, or eight complete papers at once, all cut, pasted, folded, and counted. These advances have all been distinctively American work. When the century closed, the high-water mark attained by the American printing-press manufacturer was an octuple machine, producing forty-eight thousand complete sixteen-page papers per hour, cut, pasted, folded, and counted. But this machine can also be adjusted to give ninety-six thousand eight-page papers per hour, if desired; or to combine the products of these different cylinders almost at will. In current, every-day practice, a quadruple machine which prints twenty-four thousand papers of eight pages per hour, can be changed in a few minutes so as to print twelve thousand papers of either sixteen pages, or of fourteen, or twelve, or ten. Another series of changes can also be arranged by which the same press will print papers of eight pages, or of six, or of four, separately cut, folded, pasted, and counted. The practical result of all this is to give the manager the power to determine at the last moment the size of the paper he is going to make that morning, with exact reference to the amount of matter he has prepared to print. For-

RECENT CHANGES IN THE PRESS

merly an important piece of news, the shipwreck of an ocean steamer, the sudden death of a King or President, coming into the office late at night, compelled the choice between cutting the important news down or cutting everything else down to make room for it. Now the manager has only to order two or four or six more pages in his paper; and the journal is none the less complete in the ordinary news of the day because of the absorbing sensation that burst upon it an hour or two before the printed sheet must be in the hands of its readers.

Obviously another improvement was needed before these could be utilized to the utmost. There must be cheaper and quicker means of putting news in type, to keep pace with these quicker and cheaper facilities for printing it. That came in the form of a practical abolition of movable typesetting in large newspaper offices and the substitution of machinery producing bars that carry in solid metal a whole line. As late as 1880, a first-class morning newspaper, varying in size as was then customary from eight to twelve pages, was compelled to employ a regular force of from seventy-five to one hundred and fifty compositors. About that time the multitude of experiments on typesetting machines, on which many hundreds of thousands of dollars had been lost by numbers of infatuated inventors in different countries, began to give promise in the United States of practical results. A long course of baffling experiments still confronted the small

RECENT CHANGES IN THE PRESS

syndicate of newspaper publishers who undertook to develop the system they thought the most hopeful, but at last, in July, 1886, the first installment of an order was given for machines to replace hand compositors throughout the general work of a large newspaper. It is perhaps unnecessary to add that this order was given by a New York newspaper! Within a year and a quarter the success in its office was so clear that the other members of the syndicate took the same step. The first paper outside the syndicate to introduce machine composition was an old New England one, "The Providence Journal," in 1889, and the next was "The New York Herald," in 1890. By 1900 almost every daily paper of the first and second class in the United States had made the change from types set by hand to machine composition of one sort or another. Of the kind of machine first used in New York, there are at present over five thousand in daily use in American newspapers; and there are several other kinds, also the result of American invention, which are now endeavoring to dispute the market. By these machines the cost of newspaper composition in well-organized offices is reduced to one-half the former figure, while the capacity of each operator for rushing late matter into print is more than trebled; in fact, in the case of really rapid operators, is increased five or six fold.

If these details have not wearied you, we have now reached a point where you can begin to estimate the startling material changes since 1880, in

RECENT CHANGES IN THE PRESS

the conditions under which newspapers are produced. The cost of the raw material has been reduced from two-thirds to three-fourths; the cost of composition one-half, the cost of printing in a greater proportion than either. Meantime the supply of the raw material has become almost unlimited; the speed with which news can be put in type has been so greatly increased that columns and pages of new matter, if need be, can be set within an hour of the time when the paper must reach its readers; and the speed with which printing can be done has been so revolutionized that it is easier to catch mails and news companies and newsboys at the earliest hour desired with an edition of a hundred thousand now than it used to be with an edition of five or ten thousand.

Obviously, the business result from these revolutionary changes in the methods of the business was inevitable, no matter what the sentiments, or wishes, or even principles of the men engaged in it. Nothing could prevent either a great reduction in price or a great increase in size, or both; and nothing could then wholly avert the moral changes which soon began to accompany this unexampled facility of production. It is to these changes I wish next to invite the special attention of any who think of choosing the making of newspapers as their vocation for life.

Reductions in price created a new and different constituency. It is a mistake to suppose that the

RECENT CHANGES IN THE PRESS

one-cent papers gained their main support by drawing away the old patrons of the high-priced journals. What they chiefly did was first to induce many of these to read an extra paper, and next to find new classes of readers. A famous New York editor long ago was complimented on his news gathering, and then asked why he did not take pains to show an equal superiority on his editorial page. "Dom your fine writing," was the curt reply; "'The Smasher' is written for men that can't read!" In the sense he meant, the cheap press soon came to be largely aimed at "men that can't read," or at least at men who had not been habitual and regular readers of the high-priced daily papers. But these men would not buy even the cheapest newspaper every day unless it interested them. The bait must be something in the line of their existing tastes and appetites. This is not to say that it must necessarily be low or degrading. That sort of matter may be a bait too; but there are others. Mankind is never as bad as the reformer pictures it; and even among bad men, most of their tastes may be not intrinsically or openly bad. But many require high flavors. The newspaper that interests them must put things plain and strong. If there has been a murder, it must not blink a single ghastly detail. If there has been a defalcation, the language about the defaulter must be red hot, particularly if he has heretofore led a respectable life or been a church member. The paper must evince as relentless a curiosity about his family and his antecedents

RECENT CHANGES IN THE PRESS

as the most eager gossip in the little local circle that knew him ; and it must display an artistic pride in detailing and parading its discoveries in the most appetizing and suggestive way !

Most people like to see their names in print—at least while the sensation remains a novelty. Most people can likewise bear criticism of their neighbors with composure—especially if it is racy and not too ill-natured. It was obvious, then, that in developing new strata of readers for cheap daily newspapers the editor could play successfully and almost incessantly upon these two chords of human nature. The appetite thus encouraged soon craved yet greater supplies, so that the average American publisher is now nearly right when he says that in practically taking the roof off the house of everybody of any note, and in filling other parts of his paper with inane “social” or other mention of people of no note, he does not even yet satisfy the hunger and thirst for personalities which fairly possess large classes of the community.

It is only candid to add, too, that this appetite often fastens upon unsuspected victims. Many a good man looks one way and rows another ; leaves with his family the decorous paper he praises at the breakfast-table and picks up the one surcharged with personal tattle and sensation at the news-stand, “just to see what scandal is stirring,” on his way down town. The number of men who cannot restrain their curiosity about what is in the newspapers they disapprove of is a positive reve-

RECENT CHANGES IN THE PRESS

lation to the moralist who ventures to look into it. If you will pardon another reference to my personal experience, I may mention that for a long time I resisted the general tendency to extend the daily publication over into Sunday. Nearly every man I knew approved of this refusal to print a Sunday paper. Old friends went out of their way to congratulate me on thus setting my face against the pernicious habit of Sunday publication. They hoped I would never yield ; it was a noble stand and gave them yet greater confidence in my paper. Finally, as they kept introducing the subject, I took to explaining to these excellent and well-meaning men that my noble stand seemed to result merely in sending all my regular readers, when Sunday came, over to one or another of my competitors ; and next, turning suddenly on each, I would ask, "By the way, what paper do *you* read on Sunday?" Then came stammering and hesitation, to be sure ; but not once during the years this went on, did I fail to find that, with the single exception of some of the clergy, the men who were exhorting me to continue setting a noble example for Sabbath observance by not publishing on Sunday, were themselves quietly gratifying their own craving to know what was going on by reading some Sunday paper!

But reductions in price and increased facilities for production on a large scale and of any size did more than create a new and different constituency. They changed the general character of American newspapers, dear as well as cheap, conservative

RECENT CHANGES IN THE PRESS

as well as reckless and sensational. They touched papers that maintain high prices and people that rarely or never read cheap papers. One effect, early perceptible, began on the business side. Practically no newspaper is sold at such an advance above the cost of manufacture that all its expenses can be defrayed out of the profit on circulation. There must be added a certain revenue from advertising. Now what the advertiser first thinks he wants, roughly speaking, is publicity. It takes more thinking on the subject, more observation and experience, to satisfy him that what really does him good is a particular kind of publicity. The natural first impulse is to think that the paper you see in the hands of every other man in the car is the one in which to exploit your velvets, for example; and the discovery comes at a later stage in business education that those men don't buy the velvets, that hardly one in ten of them has a family that does, and that, at any rate, instead of taking the paper home to their wives and daughters, they throw it on the floor as they leave the car. The sagacious advertiser understands perfectly that his announcement does more good when it goes to readers who have the buying habit, and the means to indulge it; and therefore that character of circulation is far more important than mere quantity. But even he cannot help being affected by the belief that double or treble as many people will at any rate have his announcement in their hands, if printed in the cheap papers. He knows

RECENT CHANGES IN THE PRESS

that another is read only by well-to-do persons, among whom every reader, therefore, is a possible if not a probable buyer; but he knows also that all classes in this country contain buyers, and he has likewise found out this habit, among the most conservative classes, of gratifying their curiosity — away from home anyway — by reading the papers they ostentatiously condemn. So he comes to attach great importance to mere circulation; and concludes at any rate, that however much he may cultivate particular, choice preserves, it is unsafe not also to sow broadcast.

The conservative publisher who has kept up his standard, and perhaps also the price of his paper, instantly feels the influence of that opinion. The wish for large circulation is natural anyway, — the audience fit but few is never the most attractive to the lecturer, who has an eye to the receipts at the door, — and so, under this stimulus, the passion for circulation, simply as circulation, becomes with many an obsession. This craze for circulation rather than merit, for circulation in fact as the only thoroughly satisfactory test of merit, comes then to control policy, — circulation among intelligent and moral classes if practicable and convenient, — but at any rate a great circulation, no matter among what classes, as the final evidence of success, and the only way to make the sale of a newspaper below the cost of manufacture ultimately a source of profit.

The newspaper tendencies thus generated are sometimes made more or less needful by the gen-

RECENT CHANGES IN THE PRESS

eral demoralization of the public mind as to large numbers. To nine men out of ten, sixty thousand conveys, practically, almost the same idea as fifty thousand. In fact, few in an average gathering have a distinct intellectual perception of any number much above ten thousand; and they instinctively use and think of big figures rather than little ones. How often is an audience honestly described by a perfectly honest and conservative spectator as containing fifteen hundred or two thousand people, when the landlord knows that you can only put six hundred chairs in the hall! So the newspaper whose circulation isn't stated in these big figures comes to be thought, even by the most intelligent, to be painfully behind the age, and the newspaper publisher with the best intentions in the world is often driven to all sorts of devices to make this unnatural expectation good. Here, then, is a source of change in the character of American newspapers as potent as any other.

We need take no account of the alleged newspapers that buy their circulation for the sake of claiming it with advertisers. Such publications exist by the dozen, and do have circulations running from a hundred thousand up to a million. One small sheet, published once a month, or in conjunction with kindred ones, once a week, whose nominal price was twenty-five cents, was known to have expended about \$1.25 to secure every real subscriber it had on its books. Under the excessively liberal postal laws of the United States, it was en-

RECENT CHANGES IN THE PRESS

abled to circulate an equal number of "sample copies," the names for which it procured from the shops receiving "orders by sample," and thus built up an advertising medium for those shops, and developed a profitable business. A good many others are treading the same path. It is the legitimate end to the policy of selling at less than cost and taxing the loss on the business community in the shape of advertising.

But the real newspaper must depend on its contents to attract, at whatever cost, the swarm of new readers which it feels that the imaginative public, to whom a quarter of a million are almost as fifty thousand, expect of it. A disposition to lower the character to catch the largest possible audience is thus naturally suggested and is too often found irresistible. Criminal news is reported in general, not merely in notable cases, more fully and with more piquant details than ever before; and the whole continent is more apt to be drawn upon for the supply. If a scandal is narrated, the soiled dove is apt to be portrayed as one of the most rarely beautiful of her sex; and many a sordid squabble between shop-girls or denizens of the tenement house in the hands of a skilful reporter takes on the romance and radiance of the divine wrath between Greek goddesses. A similar exaggeration often obtains in reporting any unusual occurrence, or in quoting anything from a prominent man. Competitors are apt to strive to outdo each other in the unprecedented sensationalism with which

RECENT CHANGES IN THE PRESS

whatever is thought capable of bearing it is expanded; and even when the facts are not distorted, the headings are made startling enough for the downfall of a dynasty or a mortal disaster to the Republic,—and you are lucky if you don't get them in blood-red ink besides!

Nothing is supposed to be more noble and courageous and perilous than for a newspaper to describe private and especially public peculations. The cost of the composition bills in the long-drawn accounts of some petty official delinquency are thus sometimes as great as the amount of the default. To be ever alert to protect the interests of the people is supposed to be the surest road to the favor of the masses; and so, if the young reprobates in the reformatory accuse the superintendent of treating them harshly, the Press is apt to be on the boys' side, and it may go hard with that superintendent if he cannot do what the common law never required, prove his innocence. If some pauper can tell a plausible tale of bad food or severe requirements about work, he has enthusiastic champions in the Press. Whoever is accused of doing anything that can be criticised in the administration of charity or the regulation of discipline, or even in the ordinary enforcement of the laws about the unfortunate, or the criminal, or the pauper, or about a workingman or a trades-union, will do well to look promptly to his defences. An enlightened Press, the palladium of the liberties of all, but especially of those who do least to deserve or protect

RECENT CHANGES IN THE PRESS

them, and who presumably have the most friends that buy cheap newspapers, will be upon his trail, and, under a plausible charge, will be apt to assume him guilty till he is overwhelmingly proved innocent—and sometimes even longer!

And so again circulation is sought in endless accounts of chowder parties, excursions, dances of the Eighth Ward Rounders, meetings of patriotic societies, women's debating societies, grandsons of their grandfathers' parades, charities, public complaints about charities, scrambles for petty offices,—of every conceivable form of the multiplied activities of an age when all the world seems to be wanting to rush into cities, and live in the glare of electric light, and move to the accompaniment of brass bands, and be tortured with unrest if ever left out of public sight and notice except when asleep.

It would be unjust not to give the other side of the picture. While these traits of the American newspaper have been increasingly developed under the cheapness of production and expansion of facilities and craze for mere circulation, there are other changes as marked and most beneficial. The flippancy of our newspapers, which so vexed the soul of Matthew Arnold, certainly continues, as well as their deplorable addiction to the use and invention of slang. But they are more generally well written than they were fifteen years ago; and are often more attractively arranged. The number of

RECENT CHANGES IN THE PRESS

young college-bred men whom they enlist grows steadily larger. They are better informed on the subjects they discuss, or at least they have acquired and organized far better means of gathering information. They glean news with amazing thoroughness, and exhaust it from the most secluded and guarded hiding-places with the mysterious energy of the air pump. Whoever has had to do with public affairs has learned that as all nature is in conspiracy against a vacuum, so, under the guidance of the newspapers, the whole world around them is in conspiracy against a secret. They cover the earth with their correspondents. They study the progress and even the politics of all nations. They give foreign news by cable with tenfold the fullness of a few years ago. Almost every first-class paper has its own special cable letter from London or Paris. In fact, the ocean lines are used as freely now by the Press as the line to Washington formerly was. A rate of fifty-five cents a word from China, and of far more from the Philippines, does not check the full daily reports. Transformations and rivalries in Associated Press organizations have made it easier to start newspapers, and easier to secure a good news service from all the world. As for our own country, telegraphs and telephones, in the energetic hands of the Press, have made it from ocean to ocean a mere sounding-board. The newspapers follow all explorations, terrestrial or sidereal. They watch every inventor, and tell the marvels of every discovery. They cul-

RECENT CHANGES IN THE PRESS

tivate systematically and assiduously the fields of Literature, Art, Science, Music, and the Drama. They present letters of adventure and pictures day by day of the business world. They give details of political, legislative, judicial, financial, maritime, railway, social, educational, reformatory, charitable, and religious movements, especially in the Sunday issues, in a profusion, variety, vivacity, and popular attractiveness never before approached. There has been an extraordinary increase in the attention given to the interests of women, and also in the space surrendered, even in the most sedate of journals, to every conceivable variety of sport. All kinds of special interests find constant and copious notice,—bicycles and bicycle riders, automobiles, their makers, patterns, drivers, and records, chess, checkers, bridge-whist, spelling reform, and every other crank reform, amateur photography, and so on and on to anything and everything new that may be found under the sun. In fact, the great American daily has become a good deal like the great "Department Store,"—a sort of universal provider.

In the villages and smaller towns scarcely anybody, fifteen or twenty years ago, habitually took more than one large daily paper, and many were satisfied with only weeklies. Even in the larger cities, the average well-to-do householder was often content with one morning paper, to which he sometimes, but not in the majority of cases, added another for the evening. Now few readers of the

RECENT CHANGES IN THE PRESS

prosperous class get on with less than one of each for the home, and another, preferably of different politics, for the office or the street car. Orders from New Yorkers to serve in all six or seven daily papers are not uncommon enough to attract notice; and even the children and servants are found with their favorite journals. Never since the first daily was printed did they give so much for the money, and never were they so much sought after. Everybody reads them,—and nearly everybody, among the more educated classes at least, abuses them.

It would be unjust to say that the influence of the Press at large has declined in proportion as its circulation has increased, and its resources have expanded, and people have acquired the habit of reading both sides. Yet with all this superfluous richness of material, facility of output, and enormous increase of circulation, it must be obvious to every one that the influence of the modern newspaper has not advanced in equal proportion, nor has its general standing in the community improved. To be the editor of any great newspaper in the past was a sort of distinction. Now it puts one at once upon his defence. What sort of a newspaper is it, is the question everywhere involuntarily asked, and a question that must be answered before one's status is fixed.

When the papers show reasonable agreement they still carry the whole community with them with practical unanimity. The most corrupt and powerful combination cannot long stand, even yet,

RECENT CHANGES IN THE PRESS

against a united Press. Government by newspaper is in that case, more than ever before, the most powerful, the most resistless form of government in the known world. But when they differ radically on any great public question, people give less serious thought to what any of them say, and often give less to the question itself. In the multitude of contradictory voices one neutralizes another, and the reader thinks of something else.

Meantime the influence of the Press, if measured merely by the frequent appearance of actual subservience to it, has been enhanced. It may turn out, like the pagan god, to be all powerful, but at any rate it is known to be ugly. Thus the outward deference is accompanied by a latent distrust which is becoming unfortunately common, and even by a distinct dislike which, in spite of the supposed imprudence, is now more often openly expressed than formerly. The possibility of more stringent repressive measures, social or legal, for false news and unwarranted personality is sometimes discussed, but not often seriously approached.

AN EDITOR'S REFLECTIONS

IV

JOURNALISTIC DUTIES AND
OPPORTUNITIES

JOURNALISTIC DUTIES AND OPPORTUNITIES

WE have considered what American newspapers are, and some of the influences that have brought them to their present state. I am venturing now to add something about what they may be, and the influences that may shape their changes and development; as well as a few hints as to the qualifications likely to be most useful for those who mean to engage in making them.

There used to be a tendency to levity in some skeptical quarters throughout the country when "the stories of Washington correspondents" were mentioned. Perhaps it may have been turned in later years on New York instead of Washington. At any rate, a club of New York correspondents invited a multitude of people, of all sorts and conditions, and from all parts of the country, to tell them "How the influence of the Press can be increased?" Now it was certainly a significant fact that such a body should ask a question implying that the influence of the Press needed to be increased. Was it not equally significant, as a hint at the prevailing state of the public mind, that in more than half the great number of replies there was found, in one form or another, some expression of the common idea that what the Press most needed was to tell the truth and be fair? That, for example, was practically the response of three men so well known and with such widely divergent

JOURNALISTIC DUTIES

points of view as His Eminence, Cardinal Gibbons, His Excellency, Wu Ting Fang, and the free lance who is fighting on two continents to avoid the disgrace of dying rich, Andrew Carnegie,— Catholic, Confucian, and Agnostic in absolute accord.

Well, their prescription may be right, even if the diagnosis be not uniformly exact. And, in any case, it is a fact of ill-omen for the American Press that large and influential sections of the community have come to persuade themselves that very many newspapers do not try either to tell the truth or to be fair, except in so far as they feel sure it will pay. Yet this is to judge the newspapers with more unfairness and untruthfulness than any of them ordinarily display. The real sin, even with the most reckless newspaper, is rarely a deliberate desire to circulate false news instead of true. In the long run that is not profitable. If readers find too often that they have been flagrantly and intentionally deceived, even the most sensation-loving are apt to go somewhere else. Far more commonly it is the desire to be first, either with the news or with something resembling the news nearly enough to leave their readers to believe that they had the "substance of it," and had it first. The directors of the Associated Press have lately had a curious complaint and received a curious explanation. The complaint by members was that their correspondence from the Isle of Wight and by cable was so slow that they were half an hour behind their rivals in announcing the death

AND OPPORTUNITIES

of the most venerated and most generally beloved woman in the world. The explanation of the general manager was that the rivals guessed when dissolution would come, and blundered into fixing the time over half an hour too soon! Into the merits of that ghastly dispute far be it from me to enter. But the fact that it exists is enough to illustrate a common origin of the discrepancies and inaccuracies with which newspapers are taxed. They think they must have a big circulation; to that end they must be first with the news; if a thing is pretty sure to happen, it is more enterprising to announce it half an hour too soon than not to be ahead of your rival; and the reading public is so eager to hear some new thing, and so good natured about small tricks and inaccuracies, that "pretty near" becomes for circulation purposes good enough.

Does that statement, which I believe to be quite fair, leave the fault wholly on the shoulders of the newspapers themselves? To pursue the inquiry would raise a very large question between the community and the newspapers, and perhaps we may now give it a little attention.

The thermometer does not make the heat it indicates, nor the barometer create the storm it foretells. No more does the newspaper at first create the demand it supplies. And yet it is something more than a mere register of existing conditions. The very law of its being leads to its furnishing

JOURNALISTIC DUTIES

all it can, and ahead of all others if it can, of the kind of matter it has reason to think people like. It over-supplies the existing demand, in the belief that this will increase the demand. And it does. If the average New York reader had been told, twenty years ago, what sort of intelligence he would now be found searching his morning paper for, he would have resented the imputation. But use doth breed a habit in the man; and the tattle regarded as impertinent and offensive, twenty years ago, is now relished as amusing personal detail, showing its purveyor to be a "live, up-to-date" newspaper. The daily journals are thus actually changing the taste and the standards of large classes of the community. They do more. The details of one crime assiduously advertised often precede another closely enough to provoke the suspicion, at least, that they suggested it. The tattle about Miss Smith's "coming-out ball" inspires a wild desire among the Browns, Blacks, and Joneses to get more columns of vapid notice for their balls. In a thousand ways the newspaper and the community act and react upon each other. It is true that the newspaper only furnishes what the community wants,—remember that when you assail the editor,—but it is also true that the wants of the community are enlarged by the newspaper pabulum it feeds on; and that is something for the editor to remember! If the paper is bad, that is the fault of the community that supports it; but the bad paper tends to make the community worse,

AND OPPORTUNITIES

and that is the fault of the men who issue it. Less shameless readiness to furnish bad things because there is a market for them is certainly needed in the newspaper business; but less sanctimonious pretence on the part of the people who cry out against the badness of the newspapers and yet keep on buying and reading them would also be in order!

When a Tweed ring is exposed or the corruption of a state government arouses protest, severe moralists are in the habit of saying that the people, after all, get just as good government as they deserve, and will have better when they deserve it. One form of government in this country is the government by newspaper, and as to that the saying is certainly true. A moment's reflection will convince even the sternest moralist, that till publishing newspapers ceases to be a matter of business, and becomes merely a species of religion or "good works," it is difficult to hold the newspaper rigidly to a standard which the community does not want and will not maintain. Free your minds about their shortcomings if you like, but do not forget that, whatever their faults, your community chooses to sustain them, and that most of them are surely printing what they think they have reason to believe the largest numbers desire.

I said the most of them. There are newspapers which deliberately resist certain tendencies and even demands of their readers. There are, in fact,

JOURNALISTIC DUTIES

many newspapers that have long done the community a service in this regard for which they have little recognition and no gratitude. As far back as 1879 I ventured to make some remarks on this point, which I am going to take the liberty of repeating here:

“ The evil tendencies of the Press in our day are to be seen plainly enough; they have been seen in all days, since the first newspaper was made. It even works more evil now than it ever wrought before, because its influence is more widespread; but it also works more good, and its habitual attitude is one of effort toward the best its audience will tolerate. There is not a newspaper to-day in New York, faulty as they all are, that is not better than its audience. There is not an editor in New York who does not know the fortune that awaits the man there who is willing to make a daily paper as disreputable and vile as a hundred and fifty thousand readers would be willing to buy. It is the newspaper opportunity of the time—the only great opportunity that has come since the concentration of capital and mechanical facilities gave the monopoly of the present field to the existing journals. Several of these might take it; the editor of every one of them knows he is making a better paper than his constituency would like, and that he might add a half to his circulation by making it worse; every one of them knows that a less scrupulous rival may come to do what he refuses. It is with an ill grace that theoretical reformers reproach these men for lowering the newspaper standard, and making journalism a curse instead of a blessing.”

Well, nobody will get me to admit that those remarks come now, as a harsh critic has said, under

AND OPPORTUNITIES

the head of fulfilled prophecy! But it may be admitted as a thing less liable to dispute that the statement is still true as to the papers of to-day. There is a large public yet, ready to have them worse! It is rarely difficult, in this great, easy-going, good-natured, curious country, to make money at first by being more reckless and lively than your neighbors. Possibly, after a time, in this industry as in others, there may come a reaction, springing from that common bane of the manufacturer, over-production! Does it ever occur to you, when you hear a specially bitter outcry against newspapers in any community, that it must come dangerously near representing one of two things, cant or imbecility, and may represent both? If the people who raise the outcry keep on supporting the papers they rail at, it is cant. If these papers are really as bad as they are painted, it is also imbecility. For libel at least is a punishable offence, and the community that groans under it, but will not lift its hand to protect itself, seems impotent and contemptible.

Here, however, we encounter a curious state of cross-purposes. Not half enough libel suits are brought; and yet most of those that are brought are unjust. People who have character to protect resort too rarely to the law against libel; but those whose character could hardly be injured are the first, under the guidance of lawyers looking for their pay to a share in the verdict, to institute libel

JOURNALISTIC DUTIES

suits as a means of speculating on inadvertent errors. Unhappily, the curious state of the law and the lingering effect of old decisions that ill-fit modern conditions combine to promote this unfortunate reversal of what every jurist and every good citizen has at heart. It is the rule of "compensatory damages" that makes the law which honest men hesitate to use in their own just defence, a perfect fountain of speculation for men who have no character to lose, no shrinking from disagreeable surroundings, and consequently no reluctance to enter the courts on an ill-odored quest for cash.

Take an old case to illustrate this perversity of law. A newspaper published that a certain state official had been intoxicated. That was true. Unfortunately it was misled (by his general character or by some accident-) into adding "on a certain public occasion." That was not true. The newspaper was able to prove that the man was habitually and grossly intemperate, and to adduce numerous and conspicuous cases in which he had thus displayed himself; and it not unnaturally claimed that he had little character left to be damaged by an unimportant inaccuracy of detail, and that at any rate the damages for such a slip should be nominal. But the court sternly held that these facts made no difference; that they could not even be laid before the jury; the man was not proved to have been intoxicated on that occasion, malice must therefore be presumed, and the damages might, in the jury's discretion, even be exemplary. And so the state

AND OPPORTUNITIES

official found that his bad character, which naturally led people into such errors about his conduct, was a gold mine for him.

In another old case, a woman had been accused of certain misconduct in certain company. The only error was as to the company, and the person thus wrongly involved made no complaint. The misconduct of the accused woman was frequent and notorious, and the newspaper was able to prove it *ad nauseam*. But she sued for the damage to her character by the unimportant inaccuracy in the newspaper's statement, and recovered for it as if she had been a saint. In another case it was published in a multitude of papers that a man had defrauded his employer in a certain way. The statement was almost certainly true, though there was unexpected difficulty in getting legal evidence of it. It could be proved that he had defrauded him in other ways, and had defrauded other employers before him; but for the purpose of estimating the value of the character he had left to be libelled, none of these facts could be considered, and he got exemplary damages from one newspaper after another till his bad character turned out far more lucrative to him than a good one could ever have been.

In another case a New York paper found in the Treasury Department, in a place involving the handling of public money, a grossly unfit person, and gave public warning that, when in the employ of his own state, his firm had defrauded its treas-

JOURNALISTIC DUTIES

ury, that he had admitted it, and had been in prison “for the offence.” The Secretary of the Treasury was a political opponent of the newspaper, but an honest man, the late Daniel Manning, and he promptly turned the fellow out. The latter sued the newspaper for damages. The substantial allegations were proved, but it was found that the imprisonment was for another offence. Thereupon, the form that justice took in the state and city of New York was that the thief was held entitled to recover, and he did get a verdict for nine thousand dollars! That was the price a paper was asked to pay a thief for having tried honestly to serve the public, and discharge a plain public duty by letting a high official know that he had the thief at his money drawer.

All this may not be justice, but there is no doubt it has long been law. Happily a change seems to have come. In a recent case a man who was inadvertently reported as having committed suicide, brought suit for the scandalous charge. The newspaper had simply been misled by the blunder of a distant agent, without the suspicion of malice. But when the man undertook to speculate on the cruel injury to his character from the story that he had killed himself, and demanded exemplary damages, the newspaper succeeded in getting permission to prove that his character had at any rate not been good enough on more than one occasion to keep him from killing other people. For once the poor libelled, homicidal victim and his speculative law-

AND OPPORTUNITIES

yers were overruled by the presiding judge, who uttered merely the common sense of mankind in saying that in an action for libel the damages could be properly assessed only when the jury knew how capable of injury the man's character was; so that, as he held, "They may intelligently fix its pecuniary value by the extent of its injury." In another case a woman, inaccurately reported to have eloped with a certain man, recovered a heavy verdict for damages, and the highest court affirmed the judgment. Then it was discovered that she had been living with him before the alleged elopement, and thereupon a new trial was granted, the court holding that while the new facts did not establish the truth of the published story about an elopement, they did prove the vice which was the substance of the story, and might therefore be properly shown in reduction of damages.

I am able to cite only one other recent ruling of similar liberality, and as I think of substantial justice, by an eminent judge. It was from a man who now ornaments the Supreme Bench of the United States, and to whom Yale has recently listened with profit. Mr. Justice Brewer, while still sitting in circuit, found that a published accusation of an infamous nature against a woman could not be sustained, but permitted the newspaper to show other acts on her part which indicated that her reputation could not have been injured by the publication, as that of a good woman would have been.

Without questioning in the least the learning or

JOURNALISTIC DUTIES

uprightness of many judges who are still apt to hold differently, I venture to point out that a reasonable liberality as to the admission of evidence about general character in the case of inadvertent and unimportant inaccuracies like these, would be in the interest of the honest Press and of the community that wants an honest Press; while it would be against the interest only of speculative rogues and their lawyers; and that severity of construction and promptness of prosecution against deliberate and persistent libels on upright citizens would be most helpful to the same public interests.

Please to notice that in every one of these cases the newspaper was trying to do what every good citizen would regard as proper, if not actually its duty, in exposing or censuring wrong-doing; and in each its mistakes, regrettable as they were, did no harm unless to bad people, and even did them no substantial harm. The machinery of the law was thus at the service of the unworthy, while those chiefly in danger from it were the ones who had been trying to do right, and serve the public welfare. It used to be more costly for a railroad to take off some of a man's fingers or toes than to kill him outright. So the law and the courts and the public disposition seem to combine in making it more dangerous now to fall into a mistake about the precise variety or date of the crime a notorious rogue committed on some particular day in his variegated career, than to perpetrate almost any libel upon a good man. Ten suits for such inadvertencies

AND OPPORTUNITIES

are brought and prosecuted to a profitable conclusion for one that is brought by a reputable person against a paper of undoubted ill-will for a real libel. How can you stimulate the Press to tell the truth and be fair, while you let the deliberately untruthful and unfair alone, yet hold those who are fair in intention and only untruthful by misadventure and about people of bad character, to a costly responsibility, amounting to persecution?

In younger and perhaps callow days, I ventured to formulate the position of the respectable Press on this subject; and in spite of all adverse circumstances believe that, if the community and the courts would only encourage it, by far the greater part of the substantial Press of America would still cherish the same wishes and gladly pursue the same policy:

“No higher service can be rendered journalism to-day than by making it responsible for what it says, and giving the humblest citizen whom its gigantic power may purposely wrong, easy and cheap justice. Make libel suits easy; make them cheap and speedy; let them lie only in cases where the publication was palpably malicious, or fair and prompt correction was, on due application and proof, refused. . . . It would be a deserved discipline, if we have done any man a wrong and refused correction. It would make easier the business of enforcing caution and fair dealing on the hundred assistants whose several judgments must be more or less trusted in making up every issue. It would give to every word we did utter an additional weight, and it would deprive the bad men we expose of their present ready answer, ‘Oh,

JOURNALISTIC DUTIES

that does n't amount to anything ; the newspapers abuse everybody.' It is an ill day for journalism when people do not care what the newspapers say against them. It is an ill day for the country when people do care and cannot get their wrongs redressed. It will be better for both when justice is cheap and journalism is just."

To that old effort to state the best aspirations of the Press let me only add that the community has something to do in the matter besides grumbling. When it shows that it does want real libels punished, and does not want to punish good newspapers unduly for accidents in the course of their honest efforts to deal justly with misconduct in office or demoralization in society, it will have a better chance for seeing such newspapers as in its better moments it thinks it wants!

Well, what are these likely to be? We have seen the startling changes of the last twenty years. What are you to expect and prepare for in the next twenty?

We had lately an interesting illustration of what a very successful English publisher thought an American newspaper ought to be. As has happened before, his precept and his example did not quite go together. What he chiefly recommended was brevity and vivacity of matter, a convenient summary and index to the news, and greater compactness of form. What he did was to use as much paper as ever and ask for more; throw away a fifth of it in extra margins; give rather less satisfactorily the

AND OPPORTUNITIES

same sort of reading-matter as before, but make it much harder to find, and then tell the news over again in a summary drawn out to unusual length. What was good in his experiment was not new, and what was new was—well, he was a stranger in the land!

On its physical side, his experiment of giving the present page of the New York paper another fold and thus doubling the number of pages was suggested thirty years ago by several American editors,—Samuel Bowles and Henry Watterson among them, to say nothing of a third,—and was in some cases tried. The smaller form of page was adopted about that time in London by “The Pall Mall Gazette,” and afterward by “The St. James Gazette” and other evening papers. It was long ago taken for weekly and semi-weekly papers, secular and religious, in this country, and more recently by “The London Times” for its weekly. But the notion of adapting it to daily use by first-class American papers confronts at once the objection that the busy reader does not like it so well since he has double as many pages to turn to find the news over which he only wishes to cast a hurried glance; and the publisher does not like it so well because he loses so much time in making up double as many pages, and so much white paper in double as many margins. The offset is the greater convenience of handling, especially in crowded places; but the net result is that, unless the great American daily papers are to be much reduced in

JOURNALISTIC DUTIES

total bulk, their pages are not likely to be made only half the present size.

It is safer to predict that the better class of daily newspapers and their readers may come to a mutual understanding that less quantity and better quality would be mutually advantageous. "The Saturday Review" once called Macaulay the father of picturesque reporters, and Dickens has often been called their prince. No doubt these are ambitious models; but the Press that sent MacGahan to a European war, and Harding Davis and Bigelow to an American one, and has developed so many of our most popular authors from its ranks, can rise above the present wordy and tedious level of telling the news whenever the editors and their readers agree that it is desirable. In that direction lies one of the best hopes for the future of the best newspapers. Fewer words; shorter stories, better told; fewer eighteen dollars a week reporters, who only write by main strength and awkwardness, and more men who have learned the capacities of the English tongue; fewer men whose chief idea is to rake in all the rubbish they can, and label it with startling head-lines, and more men who know what is worth telling and know how to single it out from the mass of rubbish; fewer mere photographers in nonpareil, whose sole idea is to set down in fine type everything they see, and more artists who know what to see and how to make, in words, a picture of it,—that is the line of progress for an intelligent Press, worthy of an intelligent commu-

AND OPPORTUNITIES

nity. But first of all, the public must make up its mind that the merit of a paper, its enterprise, its resources, and its importance are not determined by the number of its pages; that paper is made out of cordwood and costs two cents a pound, that type is set by steam, and that white sheets can be run through printing-machines in any number of pages you want in any big office at the rate of a hundred thousand an hour. If the people continue to want quantity, as they certainly seem to do now, the quantity will no doubt continue to be printed, though Sheridan's ghost should hiss in every editor's ear that easy printing, even more than easy writing, makes curst hard reading.

But under no circumstances can Americans be expected to return to the old idea of a paper kept small, because rigidly confined to a few classes of subjects thought likely to prove of general interest. The very people who think they would like that would be the first to complain, one if his papers omitted the report of the cotton market at New Orleans, in which he had an interest; or another if it missed the detail of Marconi's last idea about launching his messages without wires through ether, or the price of Connecticut leaf, or the committee's scheme about sailing-ships, in the subsidy bill, or the successful candidates for the Yale boat-crew. A great newspaper that has once assumed toward the intelligent classes throughout a densely populated and highly civilized region the part of a daily compendium of current information, about

JOURNALISTIC DUTIES

their complex and multitudinous activities, cannot safely abandon its field. The old notion that anybody is going to read the daily paper through was abandoned a century ago. The notion that anybody will read through even what is sometimes described as its general reading-matter must be abandoned, too. The great daily is more and more used as an encyclopedia. Each reader turns to it for what he wants, and skips the rest. The paper does its duty best in these special fields when it makes its information complete, accurate, and accessible. The reader makes the best use of it when he learns the art of skipping, and spends no time in the idle business of aimlessly and thoughtlessly glancing through what he does not seek.

The price for a great daily newspaper, in the next twenty years, can hardly undergo as violent changes in the conditions affecting it as during the last twenty. One point about it seems clear. It ought to be, and probably will be, a price that covers the cost. If a newspaper is to have the independence its readers desire and public interest demands, it ought not to furnish its manufactured product to the public so far below the cost of manufacture that bankruptcy can be avoided only by taxing the deficit on large business houses in the shape of great advertisements. The general run of ordinary advertisements that any fairly managed paper is likely to receive may properly enough be estimated, along with the profits on sales, in fixing

AND OPPORTUNITIES

the price. But when a price is fixed far below what receipts warrant, on the expectation of unusual advertisements to be drawn in from a few great shops, whether because of more circulation expected to be gained or for other considerations, the paper then, instead of being an independent exponent of public interests, is measurably in the hands of the few big shops, and is hardly more independent than their floor-walkers.

The most conspicuous effort this country has seen at publishing the largest papers for the smallest price was in Chicago. For some years those great journals sold their issues of twelve, fourteen, and sixteen pages, and in some instances far more, at half a cent apiece, to the newsdealers, who took the bulk of the editions, while for the small number retailed over their own counters they received one cent. After a time the results were acknowledged to be so unsatisfactory that they trebled their wholesale and doubled their retail price. In New York there has even been a proposition for a small paper to be retailed at half a cent, and wholesaled at a quarter of a cent, and the enterprising speculator was only hindered by the lack of half-cent currency. No doubt it could be made to live after a fashion, and even to make money. But in the long run, the intelligent man, who values his newspaper, and wishes to feel that it is not in need of being influenced by any but public motives, is not unwilling to pay for it at least the cost of its manufacture, even though that should amount to

JOURNALISTIC DUTIES

as great a sum for a whole week's supply of dailies as he pays his barber every morning.

It is distinctly to the advantage of every community that its serious and trusted papers should be rich and prosperous. The community's interests then are their interests. What helps everybody helps them, and they have no need of any other kind of help. Their first inquiry when any new proposition is presented is naturally whether it is or is not in the public interest. Their opinions can be accepted as honestly formed on the basis of that inquiry, and their help can be confidently assumed for every good cause. It is also to the advantage of the community if the owners of these papers are strong enough to be independent of immediate returns. There is many a popular flurry when a strong newspaper can render the greatest service by resisting the sudden gust, at whatever cost, and patiently biding its time. More than one newspaper whose fame is a part of our American inheritance would have had a less enviable record if it had been without money in its purse when it faced angry subscribers or discontented advertisers or both, and defiantly told them, in the memorable words of a New York merchant, that its goods were for sale, but not its principles.

But this pecuniary strength is less helpful to the community when the newspapers, however strong, are owned by millionaires, or by combinations of capitalists whose connection is more or less secret, and who make this investment of their money

AND OPPORTUNITIES

primarily for the influence they think it may give them in some way in the furtherance of their personal ends. The best reason for owning a newspaper is because a man likes the vocation, feels some fitness for it, has a high conviction of its influence and opportunity for good, deliberately prefers it, as under such circumstances he well may, to any of the professions, and wishes to make it the business of his life. Then everything is plain and above board. His relation to the community and the policy his paper advocates is established and perfectly understood. The journal becomes, if successful, one of the fixed public institutions of the city, as much as the City Hall, and often immeasurably more useful. The worst reason for owning a newspaper—from the point of view of the public interest—is because a man thinks it must then grind his axes, while he remains in the background. And the next worst condition of newspaper ownership is when a young man without capital persuades a number of ambitious business men and politicians to subscribe a capital for him, and is thus secretly committed to grinding axes in turn for any or all of them.

A gentleman whom about half the American people have at one time or another wanted to make President, has lately expressed some views on this subject, quite judicious in the main, though pushed in some particulars to extremes which greater experience would correct. Thus, while the control of

JOURNALISTIC DUTIES

a present and responsible proprietor is always, as he says, an advantage, it is not so clear that the paper will command confidence and possess influence in proportion to the extent to which it constantly reflects in its columns the strong individuality of one man. It is quite true that people used to say, "That paper means something, it has a man behind it." But the great journal of to-day has ceased to be a one-man paper, exactly as the travellers to the town it is published in have ceased to ride in a one-horse coach. For purely reformatory and propagandist purposes, intense individuality in the Press has no doubt played a great part. But it never made the greatest newspapers. Paris long had intense individuality in its Press. London scarcely ever. Does any one doubt which had the more permanent, more trusted, more powerful, and more useful journals?

There is an opposite notion which also has its advantages. When you are confronted now with the idea that the intensely individual paper "means something, it has a man behind it," that certainly does imply, after all, that it has the whims, the infirmities, the prejudices, the personal aims, and even the idiosyncrasies of one man permeating the whole sheet. But when you try the other extreme, and rejoice that "the paper means something, it has a party behind it," you array at once another class of drawbacks. The party organ must reflect, not necessarily the settled convictions of the men who own or the men who make it, but the wishes for

AND OPPORTUNITIES

the moment of the managers for the moment in the party to which it is attached. Now intelligent, conscientious support of the general policy of a party is a patriotic duty, since in such a government as ours results can be attained only through parties, and the man who prides himself on his freedom from all party ties or affiliations is simply boasting of his own impotence. Of all follies that masquerade in the name of Reform, the most pernicious is the idea that the editor can vindicate his independence only by sitting on the fence, and throwing stones with impartial vigor, alike at friend and foe. But unintelligent, submissive support of details of party policy, against judgment or without consideration, merely because the managers ask it, is another sure way to reduce the paper to impotence. It is a noble thing to have a great party behind a great paper in a worthy cause. It is something quite different to have the temporary party managers standing over the paper, prescribing for purely temporary purposes, measures or methods contrary to its convictions, — the paltriest of careers for an editor, the most pitiful rôle for a newspaper, and the surest way to minimize its influence and gain distrust. Not one paper, unmistakably of the first rank, is to be found now in that class, either in Europe or America.

We all know how admirably old maids' children are brought up. Well, all over this nation are multitudes of old maids diligently engaged in editing the daily newspapers. Every now and then

JOURNALISTIC DUTIES

one of them sets out to tell us how "the ideal paper" is to be edited. But whose ideal? Is it the ideal of a person who knows either the possibilities or the limitations of the newspaper field, who knows either the reading public or himself? Is it the same ideal the subscriber is looking for? It turned out lately in Kansas that it was the ideal of a man with very few ideas in his head, and those mostly no better than they should be. You do not need to be told that that experiment ended in a failure so absolute as to be grotesque,—excepting as an advertisement. Another of them has but one prescription—make it truly Christian. In the highest and best sense I hope the Press of the country tends to be Christian,—in the sense that it loves good, and hates evil and assails it. But only a very unworldly good man, or a very worldly schemer, proposes to make it Christian in the sense of long prayers in the market-places, and of compassing sea and land, like the Pharisees, to make one proselyte. This idea will never die out, for there is too much unsophisticated goodness in the world, and too much sophisticated selfishness eager to prey upon it. Long ago the experiment of a religious metropolitan daily was tried in the foundation of "The New York World." It was tried again in the liberal subventions given by the Remingtons and other noble men to "The New York Witness." From time to time the experiment has been renewed, there and elsewhere, always with the same monotonous result,—the last two notable cases

AND OPPORTUNITIES

appearing, curiously enough, in Kansas City and in London. While the race of unworldly good men flourishes, the idea will revive from time to time, and their good money will continue to be sent after the bad.

Another favorite prescription of the old maid editors of both sexes is to leave politics out. There are two sides to that, the patriotic side and the practical one. On the first, how could a man, fit to be intrusted with the responsibilities and opportunities of a great daily, in a free government, deliberately neglect the highest duty devolving upon every citizen, the duty tersely summed up two thousand years ago as the "care that the Republic take no harm"? On the other side, it is only needful to say that statistics of circulation combine with the daily teachings of personal observation to prove that there is no other subject which the people of a free government so imperatively demand in their newspapers as details of political movements. A Presidential Convention sends up the circulation quicker and with more absolute certainty than a great battle, or an ocean disaster, or a huge fire, or even the most offensive scandal! The highest figures attained are those of the issue announcing the result of an election. Another of the demands is that the paper shall be always, in all things, in every issue and in every item, strictly accurate. I vote for that myself. What is more, I will undertake to furnish it. I will only ask, as the single prerequisite, that you furnish me for the

JOURNALISTIC DUTIES

office staff a hundred men who never make a mistake, who always see the same thing exactly in the same light with everybody else, and who will be able to tell it as quick as the quickest; and then that you will distribute about the globe for me a hundred more, scattered from the lobbies of Washington, Westminster, and the Palais Bourbon to the headquarters in Venezuela and the Philippines, and the palaces in Stamboul and Peking, with the instruction that, with all their accuracy, these children of light must never be an hour behind the sons of Belial in turning in their stories.

Let no one imagine that I am trying to excuse perversions of the truth or justifying inaccuracy. I am only taking the liberty to remind you that perfection is not in man. Every lawyer knows that if three men witness a quarrel between a cab-driver and a drayman in the street, and undertake to give a minute account of every detail of the affair, there will invariably be discrepancies in their statements. The best intentions in the world would not save them. They would at least catch the exhortations to the impenitent horse in different phraseology, and one man would have distinguished them quite clearly, oftener than either of the others heard them. When a hundred men are working under high pressure at midnight, and dealing with news from hundreds more, scattered all over the globe, minor inaccuracies in statement can no more be abolished before the paper goes to press than can an occasional typographical error.

AND OPPORTUNITIES

Print only news that 's fit to print is another exhortation with which the editors of the country are familiar, and which I think a large part of them sincerely desire to obey. But what is fit to print, and who shall judge? Is the average, merely human editor sinful above all others if he accepts the judgment of his readers, and in the long run gives them what he sees they are resolved to have, rather than let them go off to his rival for it? "All the news that 's fit to print" is a taking motto, much seen of late, and in no possible way to be undervalued or depreciated. And yet who can follow it? The world would not hold the pages to which that paper would spread. Every new thing that happens is news; and bad as the world is, an overwhelming majority of the things that happen are fit to be told. Yet ninety-nine one-hundredths of it never ought to be printed and never is printed. If it were, that paper's readers would flee from its bulk and deadly dullness as from a pestilence.

Thus far, these suggestions may have seemed to partake more of preaching than prophecy. It is for the public quite as much as for the newspapers, or for the young men who are now coming forward to make them, to determine whether, when grouped, they portray at all the newspaper of the next quarter or half century. That newspaper will more generally tell the truth and be fair if the community and the courts do their part. But the respectable and intelligent community must not show the kind of paper it likes so largely

JOURNALISTIC DUTIES

by buying the other kind; and the courts must not emphasize their love of fairness by making the accidental and unimportant libels in the fair papers the chief objects of their judicial severity. We shall have fewer sensational papers, and get the news told more as a landscape is painted, with some sense of perspective and some artistic omission of offensive or worthless objects, whenever and as far as the public taste is well enough educated to prefer a correct and vivacious style to "blood and thunder," written and printed as if with a paint-brush. We shall surely have shorter reports of many things, if not also smaller papers. No reduction is likely to come from the general public's ceasing to look in a newspaper for information which it daily wants and has been once accustomed to find there. Information only wanted by small classes, on the other hand, may naturally drop out as class journalism develops. The notion that Sunday's paper must be ten times as big as Monday's will be mitigated. The first-class daily paper of the future is not likely to come in the form of a book or even of a pamphlet. Whatever its form, or quality, or contents, the people that read it will pay for it; it will not be an eleemosynary institution, chiefly conducted by the advertising business of the country, for the benefit of anybody that will read. Its wealth and prosperity will be welcomed as a gain and security for the whole community. It will indulge in no sham about being independent of business considera-

AND OPPORTUNITIES

tions. It will be best liked when its owners conduct it; and least when its owners, engaged elsewhere, secretly make their newspaper investment a means of furthering private ends. It will not be intensely individualized—will not be a one-man paper. It will support parties as means to a patriotic end, and religion as leading to the best life; but it will not be a party organ, or an organ of the churches. It will deal with politics according to its convictions and tell the truth according to its capacity; but not being edited by angels, it will make mistakes sometimes, and perhaps have even the grace, sometimes, to acknowledge them.

If now, among the gentlemen and scholars of Yale, who have done me the honor to follow these remarks, there should still be some unwise enough to persist in an intention to take up newspaper work, the simplest advice to give them, and about as practical as any they are likely to follow, is to imitate Lord Bacon while the resources of this institution are yet at their command, and take all knowledge for their province. The average newspaper man on the great dailies is far better educated to-day than twenty years ago, but the standard of qualifications is likely in the next twenty to be higher still. Like most of my colleagues on the press, I have little faith in "Schools of Journalism," or in "Courses of Journalism," or, if you must have the truth, in lectures on Journalism either! The only place to learn the newspaper business is in a newspaper office; and you have to be caught tol-

JOURNALISTIC DUTIES

erably young to learn it at all. But the place to acquire some of the qualifications for the business is the place where you can get the best general education the world affords. Above all, it must be an education that teaches you to see straight and to think straight; and therefore its very foundations must not be undermined by too eager a search for easy "electives."

But, assuming that Yale still encourages the sturdy old New England ideas as to the essentials of a liberal education, and that you are sure to be grounded in the Arts and Humanities, we may next look to whatever will facilitate wide acquisition and persuasive expression. You must first know things and know where to find things; and next how to interest people in your way of telling these things and reasoning about them. Knowledge, real knowledge, not a smattering, of the history of your country is indispensable, and no historical knowledge will come amiss. Constitutional and international law at least you must know, and if you can take a full law course, so much the better. Modern languages will be most helpful, and in our great newspapers a reading knowledge of at least three of them — French, German, and Spanish — becomes every year more desirable. The literature of your own language should be studied till you learn how to use the noble tongue to express to the best advantage and in the fewest words whatever you have to say. You should know your own country, and above all grasp intelligently the fact that the

AND OPPORTUNITIES

part worth knowing is not confined to a narrow strip along the Atlantic coast. You should know foreign countries, and thus chasten the notions that wisdom began with us, and that liberty and intelligence hardly exist elsewhere. You should know the people, the plain, every-day, average man, the man in the street,—his condition, his ideas, his needs, his notions,—and you should learn early that he is not likely to be overpowered by your condescension when you attempt to reason with him.

Finally, let me remind you that the man who succeeds is a man who has not undervalued what he is undertaking. This work we have considered is as varied, as exacting, and as responsible as any known to our modern civilization, if not also the most potential, for good or ill. It calls for patience, for moderation, for deliberate judgment, for quick and accurate perception, for resolute purpose, and for what the politicians call “staying power.” No man who cannot, like the pugilist, “take punishment,” has any business in it. No man who lets his nerves or his passions run away with his ice-cold judgment has any business in it. But, to him who is called, the opportunity is beyond estimate. To him are given the keys of every study, the entry to every family, the ear of every citizen when at ease and in his most receptive mood,—powers of approach and of persuasion beyond those of the Protestant pastor or the Catholic confessor. He is by no means a prophet, but, reverently be it said, he is a voice in the wilderness, preparing the way. He is by no means a priest, but

JOURNALISTIC DUTIES & OPPORTUNITIES

his words carry wider and farther than the priest's, and he preaches the gospel of Humanity. He is not a king, but he nurtures and trains the king, and the land is ruled by the Public Opinion he evokes and shapes. If you value this good land the Lord has given us, if you would have a soul in this marvellous civilization and a lifting power for humanity, look well to the nurture and training of your king!

LIBRARY
UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI

UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI



3 5051 10086 8944

FLARE

